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# CATECHISM MADE EASY.



# CATECHISM MADE EASY:

BEING

*A FAMILIAR EXPLANATION*

OF THE

**Catechism of Christian Doctrine.**

(No. 2.)

BY THE

REV. HENRY GIBSON,

LATE CATHOLIC CHAPLAIN TO THE KIRKDALE GAOL AND KIRKDALE  
INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS.

**Second Edition.**

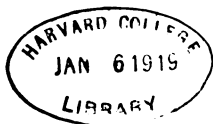
VOL. I.

"Except you utter by the tongue plain speech, how shall it be known what is said? For you shall be speaking into the air."—1 COR. xiv. 9.

LONDON: BURNS AND OATES.

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*Prof. G. B. ...*  
*Cambridge*

**Nihil obstat:**

**WILFRIDUS MORDAUNT,**  
*Censor deputatus.*

**Imprimatur :**

**HENRICUS EDUARDUS,**  
*Cardinalis Archiepiscopus.*

## PROTEST OF THE AUTHOR.

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THE Author humbly submits the following explanation of the "Catechism of Christian Doctrine" to the infallible judgment of the Holy Catholic Church.

As allusion has been sometimes made therein to various miraculous events not yet pronounced upon by the Church, and also to the heroic deeds and saintly lives of certain holy souls not yet canonised, the Author hereby protests that whatever expressions he may have used in regard to such subjects throughout the work, are to be understood as relating to facts resting on mere human evidence, and without any intention of anticipating the future judgment of the Church.

CONISTON, AMBLESIDE.

*Feast of the Assumption of the B. Virgin, 1881.*



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# CATECHISM MADE EASY.

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## FIRST INSTRUCTION.

### CHAPTER I.—*The Creation and End of Man.*

Q. Who made you ?

A. God made me.

Yes, Almighty God made you, my dear children. You did not make yourselves, nor did an angel make you ; nor were you made by chance, which would be too foolish for any one to believe. It was *God* who made you ; that Great, All-Powerful, Infinite, and Perfect Being, who made also the sun, the moon, and the stars, the earth and all that it contains, the angels themselves,—in a word, all things that are made. “All things were made by him, and without him was made nothing that was made” (John i. 3).

But *you* were not the first beings whom God made. Before he made you, he made the world for you to live in ; and before he made the world, he made the angels, who are beautiful spirits without bodies, far more wise, more powerful, and more glorious than man. And why did Almighty God make the angels ? Not because he had any need of them, for he had existed from all eternity alone in the universe, and nothing was wanting to his happiness or glory. But it was his blessed Will to make them, that there might be some one to know him, love him, and honour him as he deserves, and to share in the infinite happiness which he enjoys. For this purpose he *created* them, that is, made them by his Almighty Power out of nothing ; and having created them, he placed them in the beautiful abode of heaven, which he made to be

their dwelling-place for all eternity. But as God is not only a God of Goodness, but also a God of Justice (which virtue consists in giving every one his due), he could not, in accordance with his Justice, bestow upon the angels the eternal possession of the delights of heaven, before he had first tried their fidelity to him. He accordingly gave them an opportunity of meriting this happiness by an act of obedience. Sad to relate, a vast number of them, headed by Lucifer, one of the highest and most glorious of the heavenly spirits, rebelled against God, and were immediately cast down by him into the fire of hell, which he created to punish them. These wicked angels are called by the name of *devils*.

After this unhappy fall of the bad angels, Almighty God determined to fill up the places in heaven which they had lost by sin, and for this purpose he created another being, who is called man. But first, he made the world and all that is in it, to be the dwelling-place and serve for the use of man. This great work he accomplished, as the holy Scripture tells us, in six days; though indeed he could, by his Almighty Power, have made it all in a single moment, had he so willed it. Having thus provided for the abode and subsistence of man, God, on the sixth and last day, created our first parents, Adam and Eve.

#### CREATION OF MAN.

"And God said, *Let us make man to our image and likeness: and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping thing that moveth upon the earth.* And God created man to his own image; to the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. The Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul. And the Lord God had planted a paradise of pleasure, wherein he placed man, whom he had formed.

"And the Lord God said, *It is not good for man to be alone; let us make him a help like unto himself.* Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam, and when he was fast asleep, he took one of his ribs and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman, and brought her to Adam. And Adam said, *This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.* And Adam called the name of his wife *Eve*, because she was the mother of all the living" (Gen. i., ii., iii.).

Q. Why did God make you ?

A. God made me to know him, love him, and serve him in this world, and to be happy with him for ever in the next.

*Why did God make you ?* This is one of the most important questions that I could possibly ask you. Almighty God has made us and placed us in this world, and there is nothing more necessary for us, than to know *why* he has done so. For when a person makes anything, you know he has always some reason for making it, he expects some good out of it ; and if what he makes does not serve the purpose for which he made it, he is disappointed, and sorry that he has spent his time and trouble to so little purpose. For example, if one of you were to make a boat out of a piece of wood, and found it would not float in the water, or to make a top and found it would not spin, would you not be disappointed and inclined to say, " This is no use ; it won't do what I made it for, so I will throw it into the fire " ?

Let us now try to answer the question which I asked you just now, *Why did God make you ?* The catechism tells you, that he made you *to know him, love him, and serve him in this world, and to be happy with him for ever in the next.* You see from this answer two things,—first, that God made you for himself, *to know him, love him, and serve him ;* and, secondly, that your own eternal happiness depends upon your doing what he made you for, since, if you do your best to know him, love him, and serve him in this world, he promises that you shall come *to be happy with him for ever* in the kingdom of heaven.

Do you now understand, my dear children, how great, how noble, and how excellent is the end for which God made you ? Far different from his other creatures which you see about you, and which he made for your use and benefit, he has created *you* expressly for himself. The sun he made to warm you and give you light ; the birds, the fishes, and the beasts to provide you with food and clothing ; the world to be your dwelling-place ; but *you*, like the angels, he created for himself alone, to know him, love him, and serve him here, and to come to dwell with him for ever hereafter. Well might holy David exclaim, with

a heart overflowing with gratitude, "What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou hast made him a little less than the angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, and hast set him over the works of thy hands" (Ps. viii. 5-7).

Let us now see what we have to do in order to fulfil the great end for which God has made us, and so to obtain the eternal reward which he has promised us.

*First.*—We must *know* God, that is, we must know all about him that the Church teaches. This is what is contained in the catechism which you are about to learn. Be attentive, then, to the instructions which I am going to give you. Try to learn the answers of the catechism well by heart, and what is still more important, do your best to understand their meaning, and you will come to *know* all that is necessary about Almighty God.

*Secondly.*—We must *love* God. But how are you to do this? God himself will teach you, if you ask him, and if he sees you trying to be good and obedient children. You should often, therefore, ask God to teach you to love him: "O my good God," you should say to him, "teach me to love thee." Besides, the more that you *know* of God and his Goodness, the more you are sure to *love* him; so that attention to your catechism is a great thing to help you to *love* God as well as to *know* him.

*Thirdly.*—You must not only know and love God, but you must also *serve* him. This you do by keeping his commandments, and doing what you know will please him. Now, these commandments are contained and explained in your catechism, so that the catechism teaches you also how to *serve* God.

You see from this that your catechism teaches you how to get to heaven, since it is by knowing, loving, and serving God here, that you are to come to be happy with him in the eternal kingdom of heaven.

#### STORY OF JOSAPHAT.

A prince, named Josaphat, had lost his way in a forest while hunting. Suddenly he heard some one, at a little distance, singing sweetly. Surprised to hear so lovely a voice in a lonely forest, he

rode towards the spot from which the sound came, but was astonished to find that the voice which had so charmed him was that of a poor leper, whose body was in the last stage of decay. "Alas ! my friend," said the prince, "how can you have the courage to sing in this dreadful condition ?" "My lord," replied the leper, "I have every reason to rejoice. For forty years I have lived in this world, that is to say, my soul has been for forty years confined in this body, which is its prison. The walls of this prison are now falling to pieces, and my soul, set free from these ruins, will soon take her flight towards God, to enjoy, in his company, eternal happiness. I am so overjoyed at this thought that I cannot help raising my voice to heaven on this happy day of my deliverance."—*Mrs. Herbert.*

Q. To whose image and likeness did God make you ?

A. God made me to his own image and likeness.

Almighty God, having determined to create man, determined also to give him a being worthy of the noble end for which he made him. Wherefore, as a painter or artist who wishes to make a beautiful picture or statue, chooses always the most excellent pattern or model from which to copy, so did God, wishing to make man worthy of himself, choose the most perfect model, namely, himself, after which to make him. "And God said, Let us make man to *our image and likeness*" (Gen. i. 26).

Often thank God, my dear children, for his Infinite Goodness in giving you so noble a being, and take care never to stain or deface his image, which he has stamped upon you, by any wilful sin.

Q. Is this likeness in your body or in your soul ?

A. This likeness to God is chiefly in my soul.

Almighty God made you, as you have seen, to his own image and likeness ; but this likeness to God is chiefly *in your souls*. For you are made up, as you know, of soul and body, unlike the angels, who have a soul or spirit only. It is your body which you see, touch, clothe and feed ; but it is your soul which gives life and motion to the body. As long as we are alive, the soul dwells in the body, though we cannot see it ; but when we die, the soul is set free from the body, which returns to the dust, out of which God made it. Now it is plain that it must be in our souls, rather than in our bodies, that we are like to God, since God is a pure Spirit and has no body.

Q. How is your soul like to God?

A. My soul is like to God because it is a spirit, and is immortal.

We come now to consider in what this likeness to God consists. How can these souls of ours, so prone to evil and so imperfect, contained, moreover, within so small a space as the human body, be in any way like to the Great God, who fills the universe, and possesses every possible perfection? And yet it is so, for God, in his wonderful Goodness, has stamped his image on the soul of man. In the same way, then, as a picture, painted by a clever artist, brings to your mind at once the person whom it represents, but yet there is always an immense difference between the person and the picture; so can we perceive at once in the human soul the image of God, though man remains still at an infinite distance from his Creator.

In what, then, does this likeness or resemblance consist? Your catechism tells you that it consists in these two points:—First, the soul *is a spirit*; God is a Spirit. Secondly, the soul *is immortal*; God is Eternal.

In the first place, the soul is a *spirit*, that is to say, a being without a body of its own, though it is sometimes joined to a body, and possessing reason and free will. Thus it is the soul which thinks, and reasons, and acts in us, and makes use of the different members and senses of the body, just as it requires. It sees with the eyes, hears with the ears, thinks and remembers with the brain, tells its thoughts with the tongue, and so of the other senses. In fact, it is the soul which does everything in us that we are said to do; for the body is of itself a lump of senseless clay, and cannot do this or that, or move here or there, unless the soul sets it in motion. Do not you see in all this many points of likeness between the soul and God? I will tell you some of them.

The soul *is a spirit*, made of no material substance.

God *is a pure Spirit*, having no body.

The soul *is the life of the body*.

God *is the life of the world* and of the soul itself.

The soul *sees, hears, and knows* what passes near it; thus I see you move, hear you speak, and know what you are doing, while you are with me in this room.

God *sees, hears, and knows* what takes place in the whole world. Not even the most secret thoughts of man are hidden from his sight.

The soul *remembers many things* that are long since gone by, but which it has once known.

God *knows all things*, both past and future. Past, present, and future are alike to God.

The soul *can choose with a free will* what it will do. For example, you can sit or stand, go there or stay here, as you will ; for God has given you this free will, which is the power of choosing to do one thing rather than another among such things as man is able to do at all.

But God *is free to do all things* whatever he pleases, for his Power has no limits.

The soul of man *loves his parent, his friend, his benefactor*, or, at least, is capable of such love.

God *loves all his creatures* with an infinite love, and has loved them from all eternity.

Thus, our souls are made to the image of God, not only by being spirits, but by having the qualities of spirits—reason, knowledge, memory, free will, the power of loving, &c. It is true that these qualities in us fall infinitely short of the Divine Perfections, that is to say, the soul can do these things in an infinitely less perfect way than that in which God does them ; but still she *can* do them, and so she bears a likeness to that Good God who has given her these admirable qualities.

We come now to the second great point in which the soul is like to God, that is, in being *immortal*.

Q. What do you mean when you say that your soul is immortal ?

A. When I say that my soul is immortal, I mean that my soul can never die.

Yes ; the meaning of the word *immortal* is that which *can never die* or is not liable to death. *Mortal*, on the contrary, means *deadly*, or what *is* liable to death. Hence we call ourselves with reason “poor mortals,” because we are liable to death, as regards our bodies ; though we might also call ourselves immortal, speaking of our souls, because our souls will never die. If our first parents had



not committed sin by eating of the forbidden fruit in the garden of paradise, our bodies would not die either, because Almighty God had placed in the midst of that garden a tree, called the tree of life, by eating of the fruit of which our bodies would have been preserved constantly in health and strength ; but by the sin of Adam and Eve death entered into the world. Do not, however, think that, when the body dies and is put into the grave, and becomes the food of worms, the soul dies too. No ; the soul continues to exist without the body until the day of the General Judgment, when God will raise up the body out of the dust, and unite it with the soul once more, to share in its eternal reward or punishment.

There is one kind of death, however, which the soul does die, and that is *the death of sin*. When we fall into mortal sin, our souls are dead in the sight of God, because they are deprived of God's grace and love, and are not able to do anything that will obtain for us a reward hereafter. They still continue to exist, it is true, but only for eternal punishment, unless God restores them to the life of grace by a miracle of his Goodness.

#### THE EMPEROR'S PET STAG.

A certain Roman emperor had a favourite stag which he had succeeded in taming, and which had become much attached to its imperial master. During the day it roamed at large in the neighbouring forests, but returned at certain times to the palace to receive its food. Fearful that it might go astray, and that he might lose an animal which he prized so much, the emperor placed round its neck a golden collar bearing the inscription, "Touch me not ; I belong to Cæsar." No one, he thought, would dare to steal or injure it when they perceived that he had marked it for his own.

Now, Almighty God has acted to us in the same way as the Roman emperor to his pet stag. He has stamped his Divine image on our souls ; our will, our memory, our understanding, our whole soul, all bear the mark that we come from God and belong to God. When, therefore, the devil presumes to attack us, let us bid him begone, saying, "Touch me not ; I belong to God."—*Duty of a Christian*.

Q. Of which must you take most care, of your body or of your soul ?

A. I must take most care of my soul : for Christ has said,

“What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?” (Matt. xvi. 26.)

The soul being the noblest portion of man's nature, made to the image and likeness of God himself, and endowed with so many admirable qualities, it stands to reason that we ought to take far more care of it than of the body, which, though a beautiful work of God's hands, is, after all, without the soul, but a piece of senseless clay. But there is another reason why we should take more care of the soul than of the body. If the soul is saved, the body will be saved too, and will enjoy, together with the soul, the eternal delights of heaven; but if the soul be lost by sin, the body will have to endure, along with the soul, the eternal torments of hell. Wherefore our B. Lord, wishing to impress upon his disciples the importance of attending to the salvation of their souls above all things else, said to them one day, “*What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?*”

You see, then, my dear children, how senseless those are, who neglect their souls, and think only of pleasing and indulging their bodies. They spend days and weeks in foolish pleasures and empty vanities, or in heaping up riches, which in a little time they must leave behind them, and they cannot spare half-an-hour every day for their morning and night prayers, a short time on Sunday for hearing Mass and receiving instructions, or a few hours each month for going to Confession and Holy Communion. And yet these are the very things which, by helping to save the soul, would procure for the body also the eternal delights of heaven.

**Q.** What must you do to save your soul?

**A.** To save my soul I must worship God by Faith, Hope, and Charity: that is, I must believe in him, I must hope in him, and I must love him with my whole heart.

We have seen from the last answer that the salvation of our souls is of all things the most necessary, since, if we were to gain the whole world, it would profit us nothing at all, if at the same time we were to suffer the

loss of our souls. Hence our B. Lord calls the salvation of our souls the *one thing necessary* (Luke x. 42), because if we save our souls, *all* is saved ; but if we lose them, all is lost for eternity. What, then, must we do to be sure of saving our souls? The catechism tells us that we *must worship God*, and that this worship consists of three things, namely, *Faith, Hope, and Charity*. For God has placed us in this world, as we have already seen, to know him, to love him, and to serve him ; or, in other words, to worship him by Faith, Hope, and Charity, since it is by Faith that we know him, and by Hope and Charity that we love him and serve him. Therefore, the worship of God, that is to say, all religion, consists in these three virtues. They are the greatest of the virtues, and contain in themselves all the others ; they will, therefore, be all explained in your catechism.

#### ST. IGNATIUS AND ST. FRANCIS XAVIER.

At the time when St. Ignatius was pursuing his studies at Paris, he became acquainted with Francis Xavier, a gay young nobleman who happened to be studying at the same college. Ignatius, perceiving the noble qualities of mind and heart which his young friend possessed, was bent upon gaining him to God ; but as Xavier was at that time occupied only with thoughts of ambition and a desire of distinguishing himself in the world, Ignatius found that all his good advice was unavailing. He therefore contented himself with repeating to Xavier, from time to time, the words of our Lord, "What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" Francis, who had at first treated the advice of Ignatius with contempt, and rallied him on his devout and mortified life, began at length seriously to reflect on the words which his friend so often repeated. Applying them to his own case, he began to ask himself what indeed it would profit him to obtain all his ambitious desires, if in the end he lost his soul amid the dangers of the world. This consideration made so deep an impression on his mind that, following the impulse of grace, he put himself under the direction of St. Ignatius, entered the Society of Jesus, and became an illustrious saint and the apostle of the Indies.—*Butler's Saints' Lives*.

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## SECOND INSTRUCTION.

CHAPTER II.—*Faith—Its Nature—Its Motives—Its Object—The Catholic Church—The Apostles' Creed—Division of the Creed.*

You have already learnt, my dear children, that in order to fulfil the end for which you were made, and to save you souls, you must worship God by Faith, Hope, and Charity. The whole of the catechism is about these three virtues ; it is all taken up in teaching how you are to believe in God, to hope in him, and to love him. At present we have to speak of Faith, which goes before and is the foundation of Hope and Charity. Hence the first part of the catechism, which teaches us why we are to believe in God and what we are to believe concerning him, is headed *Faith*, while later on you will find the words *Hope* and *Charity* placed at the commencement of the chapters which explain to us the nature and practice of those two great virtues.

Q. What is faith ?

A. Faith is a supernatural gift of God, which enables us to believe without doubting whatever God has revealed.

Q. Why must you believe whatever God has revealed ?

A. I must believe whatever God has revealed, because God is the very truth, and can neither deceive nor be deceived.

Yes, *Faith* is a *gift of God*, for he bestows it on us out of his own pure Goodness, and without any merit or claim on our part. But why do we say, a *supernatural* gift ? What is the meaning of that long, hard word, *supernatural* ? It only means "something which is above the power of our nature," just as the word *unnatural* means "that which is against the feelings of our nature," and *natural*, "what belongs to or is a part of our nature." I will explain this to you a little more fully, for the word *supernatural* is one which you will often hear, and once well learnt, it is learnt for ever.

Do you know, first of all, what our nature consists of ? I told you last Sunday that it consists of a soul and a

body, and it is called the *human* nature, or the nature of man. There are other natures beside our own ; there is the nature of the angels, which consists of a spirit only, and the nature of the animals, which consists simply of a body with life. Almighty God, then, having given us the nature of man, has thereby bestowed upon us certain gifts which belong to the human nature, such as sight, hearing, free will, understanding, &c. These gifts, being part of our nature, are called *natural* gifts. But there are other gifts which God gives us, which do not belong to our nature but are far above it, such as to believe in him, to love him, to do good works, &c. Now these are called *supernatural* gifts, because they are far beyond the power of our human nature, unassisted by Almighty God.

You will now understand what the catechism means when it says, that *Faith is a supernatural gift of God*. It adds, *which enables us*, that is, which makes us able, *to believe without doubting whatever God has revealed*. Faith is *to believe*, and hence you find that acts of faith, that is, prayers expressing our faith, usually begin with the words, "I believe." Thus the Apostles' Creed, which is an act of faith, begins with these words, "I believe in God the Father Almighty." And the act of faith which comes among the three acts of faith, hope, and charity in your morning prayers, begins, "I firmly believe there is one God."

Faith, then, is *believing*. But what do we mean by believing? To believe, my dear children, is *to receive a thing as true on the word of another*. If we know anything by our own experience, for example, by seeing, hearing, feeling, or tasting, then it is not believing, but it is seeing, &c. Thus if you took a bite of an orange and found it sour, you would not say, "I believe that this orange is sour," but, "Oh ! this orange tastes very sour." If, on the other hand, I were to say to you, "Don't touch that orange, it is sour," and you were to take it for granted that it was so *on my word*, then that would be believing, because it would be receiving a thing as true on the word of another.

I have now explained to you what *believing* is ; but

notice one very important thing, and it is this. You may believe a thing to be true, because *man* tells it you, or because *God* tells it you. If you believe it because *man* tells it you, it is a mere human belief, it is not the virtue of Faith. You feel pretty sure that it is as the person tells you, but still you think it just possible that he may have made a mistake. For example, if I told you, "That orange is sour," you would probably believe me, because you would not think it likely that I should tell you a story, but you would perhaps be inclined to doubt whether I might not be mistaken after all, as I had not tasted it. If, however, you believe anything on the word of God, then there is no room for doubt,—no possibility of mistake. You take it at once for granted, *without doubting* it for a moment, because you know that God is Truth itself, and that it is impossible to suppose either that he could deceive you or be deceived himself. *Man* might be deceived or mistaken, and might even wish to mislead others; but *God*, as he knows all things, could not be deceived, and, being Goodness, Holiness, Justice, and Truth itself, could not wish to deceive us. It is sufficient, therefore, to know that God has revealed anything, for us instantly to accept it with a most firm belief. You will now understand what is necessary for the virtue of Faith.

*First.*—Our belief must be firm, unshaken, an absolute certainty, *without doubting* or wavering.

*Secondly.*—It must be a belief *in all that God has revealed* or made known to man.

#### THE FIREMAN'S DAUGHTER.

A large number of children were assembled at their lessons in a public schoolroom a few years since, when suddenly an alarm was given that the house was on fire. The children ran here and there in the greatest terror, seeking everywhere for the means of escape, and one of the pupil teachers was so terrified that she threw herself from the window of the room, which was on the second story, into the street below. In the midst of the general alarm, it was remarked that one of the little girls never attempted to escape, and though excessively pale and trembling, never stirred from the form where she was seated. When the alarm was discovered to be unfounded and order was restored, the schoolmistress asked the little

girl how it was that she had sat so still the whole time, while every one else had been trying to escape. "Please, ma'am," said she, "it's because father is a fireman, and has often told me, if ever there was an alarm of fire, to sit quite still."—*Newspaper*.

This story will show you very clearly what *believing* is, and it contains also a useful lesson for every Christian. The little girl, though very frightened, knew it was better to sit still, and how did she know it? Because *her father* had told her so, and he was a *fireman*. Being her father, he loved her too much; and being a fireman, he was too clever to deceive her. She therefore never doubted the truth of what he told her. This was *believing*, but it was only *human faith*, because it was *man* whom she believed and not God.

Learn, my dear children, from the example of this little girl, to cherish in your hearts the truths which your Heavenly Father teaches you by his Church, and to follow as faithfully his instructions as the fireman's daughter did the warnings of her earthly father. In doing so you are exercising *Divine Faith*; since it is *God* whom you believe, God, who being your Father, would not deceive you, and who cannot be mistaken, because he knows all things.

#### THE MAN BORN BLIND.

It is related in the Gospel, that when our B. Redeemer had cured the blind man at the pool of Siloe, the Pharisees through envy and jealousy persecuted him who had been cured, and expelled him from their church or synagogue. At that time he did not yet know that our Lord was the Christ and the Son of God, but thought only that he was some good and holy prophet. When Jesus, however, had heard that they had cast him out, "he said to him, *Dost thou believe in the Son of God?* He answered and said, *Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?* And Jesus said to him, *Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.* And he said, *I believe, Lord;* and falling down he adored him" (John ix.).

Behold here a beautiful example of Divine Faith, and of that prompt and entire belief which is due to the Word of God. The blind man already regarded our Lord as a prophet or messenger from God, but he no sooner heard from him that he was the Son of God himself, than

he expressed his belief, fell down and adored him, and remained to listen to his teaching.

#### NOBLE SAYING OF THE KING OF BUNGO.

Among the numerous converts gathered into the Church in the island of Japan by the preaching of St. Francis Xavier, was the king of Bungo, one of the Japanese provinces, his conversion being followed by that of many thousands of his people, and even of some of the neighbouring princes. A severe storm was soon after raised against the Christian religion, the missionaries being assailed with odious calumnies, and every effort being made to destroy the faith of the recent converts. Upon this occasion the king of Bungo made the following noble and solemn protest: "I swear in your presence, O Almighty God, that if all the fathers of the Society of Jesus, by whose ministry you have called me to Christianity, should renounce their own teaching, and even if I were assured that all the Christians of Europe had denied your Name, I would still confess, acknowledge, and adore you as the Only, True, Almighty God of the universe, and this even at the cost of my life."—*Annals of Prop. of Faith.*

Q. How are you to know what God has revealed?

A. I am to know what God has revealed by the testimony, teaching, and authority of the Catholic Church.

Q. Who gave the Catholic Church authority to teach?

A. Jesus Christ gave the Catholic Church Divine authority to teach when he said, "Go ye, and teach all nations" (Matt. xxviii. 19).

Almighty God, who has created us to *know* him, and has commanded us to worship him by the virtue of Faith, has not left us without the means of learning what those truths are which he requires us to believe. First of all, he spoke to Adam and Eve in the garden of paradise; then to the holy patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; afterwards to Moses on Mount Sinai; and later on he taught the Jews by the mouth of his inspired prophets and by the Jewish Church. But all this was only to prepare the way for his Divine Son, who came to teach us more fully by his life and public preaching, and to establish his Church, which should continue to teach in his name till the end of time.

While our B. Lord was still upon earth, he himself taught Divine truth to man by word of mouth; but as he was not to remain always visibly here below, it



entered into the order of his Providence to commit to others the charge of continuing the same work, when he should have ascended into heaven. For this purpose he chose from among those who came to listen to his teaching, twelve disciples, called Apostles, whom he ordained Priests, and to whom he gave power to say Mass, administer the Sacraments, and teach mankind what they had to believe, and what they had to do, in order to gain heaven. Among these Apostles he appointed one, viz., St. Peter, in his own place, to be the head of the others, and gave him authority to rule and govern his Church. Thus did our Lord found and establish his Church; and as he established it not for the people of that time only, but for all future ages, he gave his Apostles power to ordain Bishops and Priests after them, as they had been ordained by him, who should exercise the same powers, and continue the same work of teaching and administering the Sacraments until the end of time.

You see from this, my dear children, that there can be only one true religion, namely, that founded by Jesus Christ. This is, as you know, the Catholic religion, to which you have the happiness to belong, since the Catholic Church alone comes down from the time of the Apostles, and acknowledges the Pope, the successor of St. Peter, as its visible head. It is this Church, which, as your catechism says, gives *testimony*, that is to say, bears witness as to what was taught by Christ and his Apostles; and it is *her* pastors, the Bishops and Priests, the successors of the Apostles, who alone have *authority* from Christ *to teach all nations* in his name. "As the Father hath sent me," he said to his Apostles, "I also send you" (John xx. 21). "Going, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20).

#### ST. JOHN AND ST. POLYCARP.

Our B. Lord predicted, before his Passion, that the days would

quickly come, when false teachers would arise and make every effort to mislead his disciples. Even in the lifetime of the Apostles this prophecy was fulfilled, for we read in the life of St. John, the beloved disciple of our Lord, that he wrote his Gospel to refute the errors of Ebion and Cerinthus, who had attacked the doctrine of our Lord's Incarnation. It is related by St. Irenæus, who says he heard it from the mouth of St. Polycarp, one of St. John's disciples, that that holy Apostle chanced on a certain occasion to enter one of the Roman baths, not knowing that the heretic or false teacher Cerinthus was at that very moment within the building. Being informed of this circumstance, in order to inspire his disciples with a wholesome horror of false doctrine, which is so grievous a sin in the sight of God, he hastily fled away, saying, "Let us begone, my brethren, lest the building which contains Cerinthus, the enemy of the Truth, should fall upon our heads."

So Polycarp, St. John's disciple, showed the same horror of false teachers as his blessed master. Meeting one day in the streets of Rome the heretic Marcion, with whom he had in former times been very friendly, he passed him by without noticing him. Marcion, thinking that he had not observed him, came up and said to him, "Do you not know me, Polycarp?" "Yes," replied the holy Bishop, "I know you to be the first-born of Satan."

From these examples we see what the Apostles and Saints thought of those who presumed to call in question the authority of the Church of God.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

Q. What are the chief things which God has revealed ?

A. The chief things which God has revealed are contained in the Apostles' Creed.

You have already learnt, my dear children, that it is by the Church, which his Divine Son founded and established on earth, that God makes known to us what those things are which he requires us to believe. The Apostles, who were the first pastors of the Church, received these truths from the lips of Jesus Christ himself, and have handed them down to their successors and to us. Some of the most important and necessary of these truths are contained in the *Apostles' Creed*, or "I believe," which was, there is little doubt, composed by the Apostles themselves. It is said that they made it before they separated to preach over the world, and that they agreed to teach it everywhere to those whom they converted, as a solemn act of faith. The room, or rather cave, where they are said to have assembled on this occasion, is still pointed out in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and is visited

with great veneration. From that day to this, the Apostles' Creed has been used among Christians in every country and in every age. Even Protestants and Methodists make use of it, for they believe with us that it came down from the time of the Apostles. It is called *Creed*, from the Latin word *credo*, meaning "I believe;" so that the Apostles' Creed means, in other words, the Belief, or act of faith taught by the Apostles.

Q. Say the Apostles' Creed.

A. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth;—and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord;—who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary;—suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;—he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead;—he ascended into heaven; sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;—from thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.—I believe in the Holy Ghost;—the Holy Catholic Church; the communion of Saints;—the forgiveness of sins;—the resurrection of the body;—and life everlasting.—Amen.

I told you just now that the Apostles' Creed is a solemn act or profession of our faith, namely, that we believe the same truths which our B. Lord taught to his Apostles. When you were little infants, and were taken to the church to be baptized, you were first asked by the Priest whether you believed all the truths which are contained in the Apostles' Creed, for no one can become the child of God by Baptism, until he first receives the teaching of Jesus Christ and his Church. As you had not then sense enough to answer for yourselves, your godfather and godmother answered for you, that you did believe; and as a proof of it, they repeated aloud in your name the "I believe." Since that time you have learnt to repeat it yourselves, and have been taught to say it daily in your morning and night prayers, in order that the truths contained therein may be continually before your eyes, and may sink deeply into your hearts.

You do not know, I daresay, that there are other creeds, or professions of faith, besides the Apostles' Creed. These have been composed by the Church at different times to express her belief more fully in doctrines which have

been denied, or called in question, by wicked men. Have you ever heard any of these creeds? Yes, you have heard one very often; I mean the Nicene Creed, for it is frequently said by the Priest at Mass, at that part of the Mass when all the people are standing up after the gospel. I daresay you remember the first words of it, "*Credo in unum Deum*," "I believe in one God." It is called the Nicene Creed, because it was composed at the general council or assembly of Catholic Bishops, held at Nicæa about three hundred years after the time of our B. Lord. There is also the Athanasian Creed, and the Creed of Pope Pius. These creeds are longer than the Apostles' Creed, because they contain a fuller explanation of Catholic doctrine, but they are just the same in substance. Thus the Apostles' Creed begins, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth," while the Nicene Creed says, "I believe in *one* God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, *and of all things visible and invisible*." The words *one* and *of all things visible and invisible* were added by the Church to confute the Manichees and other heretics, who denied that there is only one God, and asserted that God created only *invisible* things, such as our souls, and that all *visible* things, that is, things which can be seen, were made by an evil spirit. In the same way the Athanasian Creed was composed by the great St. Athanasius, to explain the true teaching of the Church against the Arians, and the Creed of Pope Pius to express the belief of the Church in those points of doctrine which had been called in question by Protestants.

Q. How is the Apostles' Creed divided?

A. The Apostles' Creed is divided into twelve parts or articles.

The Apostles' Creed is divided *into twelve parts*, which are commonly called *articles*. Each of these articles contains an expression of faith in some great truth which God has revealed or made known to us. Of these truths or articles of our faith, some relate to the three Persons of the B. Trinity, and some to other doctrines of the Church.

First of all, we declare our belief in what the Church

teaches us about God the Father, and this is contained in the first article, "I believe," &c.

In the next six articles we profess our faith in God the Son, and in all that the Church teaches us regarding him. We have more to know and believe about God the Son, because he has made himself more known to us by becoming man. Thus, the second article declares who he is; the third, how he became man; the fourth, his Passion and Death; the fifth, his Resurrection; the sixth, his Ascension; and the seventh, his coming again at the last day to judge us.

We next, in the eighth article, profess our belief in the third Person of the B. Trinity, God the Holy Ghost.

After thus making an act of faith in the three Persons of the B. Trinity, and what the Church teaches regarding them, we, in the four remaining articles, declare our belief in some of the most important doctrines of the Church. The most important of all is put first in the ninth article: "The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints." This article may, indeed, be said to contain the whole Creed in itself, for if we believe in the Catholic Church, we believe in all that she teaches, and the whole of the Creed is about that.

Next comes "the forgiveness of sins" in the tenth article; "the resurrection of the body" in the eleventh, and "life everlasting," the reward and crown of our faith, in the last. These three truths are specially mentioned, because it is particularly important that we should be well instructed in them and ever have them before our eyes.

When you repeat, my dear children, every morning and evening, this beautiful act of faith, you should do so with hearts full of gratitude to God for teaching you how to *know* him by these Divine truths, and with a firm determination to live and die in the bosom of that Church, which he has established to teach and explain them to mankind.

#### THE BENIGHTED TRAVELLER.

A traveller returning to his home from a distant country arrived at nightfall at the entrance of a vast forest. Being unable either to

delay his journey or retrace his steps, he was preparing to traverse it in the dark, when he beheld an old shepherd, from whom he asked the way. "Alas!" said the shepherd, "it is not easy to point it out, for the forest is crossed by hundreds of paths which wind in every direction, and are almost similar in appearance, though all with one exception lead to the abyss." "To what abyss?" said the traveller. "The abyss which surrounds the forest," said the shepherd. "Moreover, the forest is filled with robbers and wild beasts, and is infested in particular with an enormous serpent, which commits dreadful ravages, so that scarcely a day passes but we find the remains of some unhappy travellers who have fallen a prey to it. Still, as it is impossible to arrive at the place you are going to without traversing the forest, I have, through a motive of compassion, stationed myself at the entrance of it to assist and direct travellers. I have also placed my sons at different intervals to assist me in the same good work. Their services and mine are at your disposal, and I am ready to accompany you if you desire it."

The candour and venerable appearance of the old man filled the traveller with confidence, and he at once accepted the proposal. With one hand the shepherd carried the lantern, and with the other he took the arm of the traveller. They then set out upon their journey.

After walking for some distance, the traveller felt his strength begin to fail. "Lean upon me," said the shepherd. He did so, and was able to continue his journey. At length the lamp began to grow dim. "Alas!" said the traveller, "the oil is nearly spent, and the light will soon be extinguished. What will become of us?" "Do not fear," replied the shepherd; "we shall shortly meet with one of my sons, who will supply us with oil." At the same moment they perceived through the darkness the glimmering of a light at a little distance. It proceeded from a small cabin by the side of the path. At the well-known voice of the shepherd, the door was opened. A seat was offered to the weary traveller, and some plain but substantial food was set before him. Thus recruited, he set out again after a short pause, guided by the shepherd's son.

In this manner he journeyed on during the rest of the night, passing from time to time by different cabins built along the path, at all of which he obtained both refreshment and rest, and was furnished with fresh guides. At the dawn of day he arrived, without accident, at the boundary of the forest. Then he perceived the greatness of the service rendered him by the shepherd and his sons. A frightful precipice lay at his feet, at the bottom of which he could distinguish the roar of an angry torrent. "This," said his guide, "is the abyss which my father spoke of. No one knows its depth, for it is always covered with a thick fog, which no eye can penetrate."

As he spoke, he heaved a deep sigh, and wiped away a tear from his eyes. "You appear grieved," said the traveller. "Alas! how can I be otherwise?" replied his guide. "Can I look at the abyss

without thinking of the thousands of unhappy people who are every day swallowed up in it? In vain do my father and ourselves offer our services. Very few accept of them, and of those few the greater portion, after journeying for a few hours, accuse us of alarming them without cause, despise our advice, and leave us. The consequence is, that they soon lose their way, and are devoured by the serpent, murdered by the robbers, or fall headlong into the abyss, for there is only this one little bridge by which it can be crossed, and the way which leads to the bridge is known to us alone. Pass over with confidence," continued he, turning to the traveller and embracing him. "On the other side is your true country." The traveller, overcome with gratitude, thanked his charitable guide, promised never to forget him, and, crossing the bridge, found himself at once in his own country and in the bosom of his family.—*Catéch. de Persév*

My dear children, do you understand the meaning of this beautiful parable? The good shepherd you cannot mistake; he is our B. Lord. His sons are the pastors of the Church, who, succeeding one another, continue his work of guiding the pilgrim safe through the perils and dangers of the world. The one only path which leads to the journey's end is the Catholic Church, which alone leads to heaven; all other roads lead to the abyss. The pilgrim is yourself; the lamp, the light of faith; the oil, the grace of God; and the food and refreshment, the Sacraments of the Church. Then there is the great serpent, who, you know, is the devil; while the robbers and wild beasts are wicked company and our own evil passions. The forest is the world; the bridge, death; the abyss, hell; and the pilgrim's true country, the kingdom of heaven.

How grateful, then, should we be to our Good Shepherd for providing us in his Church with so many means of escaping the dangers that beset us, and arriving at our heavenly kingdom!

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## THIRD INSTRUCTION.

**CHAPTER III. — First Article of the Creed — God the Father—Existence and Nature of God—His Perfections—Omnipotence, Eternity, Omnipresence, and Omniscience—The Unity and Trinity of God.**

**Q.** What is the first article of the Creed?

**A.** The first article of the Creed is, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth."

In the first article of the Creed we express our belief in what the Church teaches us about God the Father. We must believe—

*First.*—That he is truly *God*.

*Secondly.*—That he is the *Father*, the first Person of the Blessed Trinity.

*Thirdly.*—That he is *Almighty*, that is, all-powerful.

*Fourthly.*—That he is *the Creator of heaven and earth*.

There are other things which we know and believe about God the Father, but these are the chief and most important. The Catechism, therefore, goes on to explain these truths one by one.

**Q.** What is God?

**A.** God is the Supreme Spirit, who alone exists of himself and is infinite in all perfections.

*What is God?* This is a question, my dear children, which has puzzled all the philosophers and wise men who have tried to discover an answer to it by the light of human reason alone; for though human reason may be able to give us some indistinct knowledge of God, it is God alone who can fully teach mankind what he is, neither has he left us in ignorance of what it is necessary for us to know in regard to himself. First of all, he taught our first parents, Adam and Eve, in the garden of Paradise, that he is the One Only God, who made all things, and whom we should ever adore and obey; and our first parents handed down the knowledge of this great truth to their children. But as time went on, the greater part of men became very wicked and corrupt. Their



minds became darkened by sin, they lost the knowledge of the true God, and they began to make gods for themselves, according to their own foolish fancies. Thus, some said that the sun and moon were gods ; others, that great men who had lived on the earth, when they died, became gods ; others, that the earth itself was a god ; others again, that beasts and serpents,—nay, even the very trees and vegetables were gods. And not content with adoring as gods creatures which the Almighty had made to serve for their use and benefit, men went on in their blindness to make gods for themselves out of wood, and stone, and metal, which they carved into certain shapes and figures called idols, and then adored and worshipped as gods. Thus did man fall away from the knowledge of God, and in punishment of his own vices and wilful obstinacy, become a slave to the grievous sin of *idolatry*, that is to say, the worship of false gods and idols. But there was always the light of the true religion enlightening the world, and teaching those who were willing to be taught, all those truths which God had made known about himself. These truths are contained in the answer of your catechism, which you have just repeated.

First of all, *God is the Supreme Spirit*. But what is a spirit? I told you a little time ago that a spirit is a being possessing understanding and free will, that is, the power of knowing and willing, but without a body. It has, therefore, neither shape, nor size, nor colour, nor any of the properties of a body. Our souls are spirits, the angels are spirits, God is a Spirit ; but, oh ! what a vast difference between Almighty God and all other spirits, which are the work of his Divine Hands ! For he is not, like our souls, confined within a little body, nor, like the angels, present only in certain places ; nor is he, like both one and the other, subject to or dependent on any one ; but he is the One Great Spirit, who fills the whole universe, and who rules and governs all things, wherefore he is called the *Supreme* or *Highest Spirit*.

*Secondly*.—God *alone exists of himself*. All things have their being or existence from God, but God from no one. God made all things, but no one made God. And not

only did God give us our being when he made us, but he is continually giving it us ; for were it not for him ever supporting and upholding us, we should in a moment fall back into that nothing out of which he made us. Hence, the Holy Scripture says that “in him we live, and move, and be” (Acts xvii. 28). But, as to Almighty God, nothing upholds or supports him, for he is Being tself, giving being and existence to all his creatures.

*Thirdly.*—God is infinite in all perfections,—that is to say, not only is he Good, Wise, Powerful, &c., but his Goodness, Wisdom, and Power have no limit ; in other words, he is All Good, All Wise, All Powerful, and so of his other perfections. For these, namely, Goodness, Wisdom, Power, &c., are what are called the perfections of God. We call them good *qualities* when we speak of man, but when we speak of God we call them *perfections*. But notice that whatever wisdom, power, goodness, or other good quality man may possess, it is only very small and limited, and besides it comes from God. God, on the other hand, possesses all these perfections in an infinite degree, that is, without bound or limit. Moreover, he possesses them of his own nature, they belong to him of his own right,—nay, they are God himself.

#### THE BURNING BUSH.

When Moses was keeping the flocks of his father-in-law Jethro, he came to Mount Horeb, which is called in Holy Scripture the *Mountain of God*. Here the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush, and Moses saw that the bush was on fire and was not burnt. And he said, “*I will go and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.*”

“And when the Lord saw that he went forward to see, he called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said, *Moses, Moses*. And he answered, *Here I am*. And he said, *Come not nigh hither ; put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground*. Moses hid his face, for he durst not look at God.”

Then the Lord told him that he had seen the affliction of his people in Egypt, and was about to send him to deliver them from their oppressors, and lead them into a land flowing with milk and honey.

Then Moses said to God, “‘Lo, I shall go to the children of Israel, and say to them, *The God of your fathers hath sent me to you*.



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# CATECHISM MADE EASY.



# CATECHISM MADE EASY:

BEING

*A FAMILIAR EXPLANATION*

OF THE

**Catechism of Christian Doctrine.**

(No. 2.)

BY THE

**REV. HENRY GIBSON,**

LATE CATHOLIC CHAPLAIN TO THE KIRKDALE GAOL AND KIRKDALE  
INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS.

**Second Edition.**

**VOL. I.**

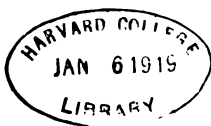
"Except you utter by the tongue plain speech, how shall it be known what is said? For you shall be speaking into the air."—1 COR. xiv. 9.

**LONDON: BURNS AND OATES.**

**1882.**



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*Prof. G. B. ...  
Cambridge*

**Nihil obstat:**

**WILFRIDUS MORDAUNT,**  
*Censor deputatus.*

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**HENRICUS EDUARDUS,**  
*Cardinalis Archiepiscopus.*

## PROTEST OF THE AUTHOR.

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THE Author humbly submits the following explanation of the "Catechism of Christian Doctrine" to the infallible judgment of the Holy Catholic Church.

As allusion has been sometimes made therein to various miraculous events not yet pronounced upon by the Church, and also to the heroic deeds and saintly lives of certain holy souls not yet canonised, the Author hereby protests that whatever expressions he may have used in regard to such subjects throughout the work, are to be understood as relating to facts resting on mere human evidence, and without any intention of anticipating the future judgment of the Church.

CONISTON, AMBLESIDE.

*Feast of the Assumption of the B. Virgin, 1881.*



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# CATECHISM MADE EASY.

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## FIRST INSTRUCTION.

### CHAPTER I.—*The Creation and End of Man.*

Q. Who made you ?

A. God made me.

Yes, Almighty God made you, my dear children. You did not make yourselves, nor did an angel make you ; nor were you made by chance, which would be too foolish for any one to believe. It was *God* who made you ; that Great, All-Powerful, Infinite, and Perfect Being, who made also the sun, the moon, and the stars, the earth and all that it contains, the angels themselves,—in a word, all things that are made. “All things were made by him, and without him was made nothing that was made” (John i. 3).

But *you* were not the first beings whom God made. Before he made you, he made the world for you to live in ; and before he made the world, he made the angels, who are beautiful spirits without bodies, far more wise, more powerful, and more glorious than man. And why did Almighty God make the angels ? Not because he had any need of them, for he had existed from all eternity alone in the universe, and nothing was wanting to his happiness or glory. But it was his blessed Will to make them, that there might be some one to know him, love him, and honour him as he deserves, and to share in the infinite happiness which he enjoys. For this purpose he *created* them, that is, made them by his Almighty Power out of nothing ; and having created them, he placed them in the beautiful abode of heaven, which he made to be

their dwelling-place for all eternity. But as God is not only a God of Goodness, but also a God of Justice (which virtue consists in giving every one his due), he could not, in accordance with his Justice, bestow upon the angels the eternal possession of the delights of heaven, before he had first tried their fidelity to him. He accordingly gave them an opportunity of meriting this happiness by an act of obedience. Sad to relate, a vast number of them, headed by Lucifer, one of the highest and most glorious of the heavenly spirits, rebelled against God, and were immediately cast down by him into the fire of hell, which he created to punish them. These wicked angels are called by the name of *devils*.

After this unhappy fall of the bad angels, Almighty God determined to fill up the places in heaven which they had lost by sin, and for this purpose he created another being, who is called man. But first, he made the world and all that is in it, to be the dwelling-place and serve for the use of man. This great work he accomplished, as the holy Scripture tells us, in six days; though indeed he could, by his Almighty Power, have made it all in a single moment, had he so willed it. Having thus provided for the abode and subsistence of man, God, on the sixth and last day, created our first parents, Adam and Eve.

#### CREATION OF MAN.

"And God said, *Let us make man to our image and likeness: and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping thing that moveth upon the earth.* And God created man to his own image; to the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. The Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul. And the Lord God had planted a paradise of pleasure, wherein he placed man, whom he had formed.

"And the Lord God said, *It is not good for man to be alone; let us make him a help like unto himself.* Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam, and, when he was fast asleep, he took one of his ribs and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman, and brought her to Adam. And Adam said, *This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.* And Adam called the name of his wife *Eve*, because she was the mother of all the living" (Gen. i., ii., iii.).

Q. Why did God make you ?

A. God made me to know him, love him, and serve him in this world, and to be happy with him for ever in the next.

*Why did God make you ?* This is one of the most important questions that I could possibly ask you. Almighty God has made us and placed us in this world, and there is nothing more necessary for us, than to know *why* he has done so. For when a person makes anything, you know he has always some reason for making it, he expects some good out of it ; and if what he makes does not serve the purpose for which he made it, he is disappointed, and sorry that he has spent his time and trouble to so little purpose. For example, if one of you were to make a boat out of a piece of wood, and found it would not float in the water, or to make a top and found it would not spin, would you not be disappointed and inclined to say, " This is no use ; it won't do what I made it for, so I will throw it into the fire " ?

Let us now try to answer the question which I asked you just now, *Why did God make you ?* The catechism tells you, that he made you *to know him, love him, and serve him in this world, and to be happy with him for ever in the next.* You see from this answer two things,—first, that God made you for himself, *to know him, love him, and serve him ;* and, secondly, that your own eternal happiness depends upon your doing what he made you for, since, if you do your best to know him, love him, and serve him in this world, he promises that you shall come *to be happy with him for ever* in the kingdom of heaven.

Do you now understand, my dear children, how great, how noble, and how excellent is the end for which God made you ? Far different from his other creatures which you see about you, and which he made for your use and benefit, he has created *you* expressly for himself. The sun he made to warm you and give you light ; the birds, the fishes, and the beasts to provide you with food and clothing ; the world to be your dwelling-place ; but *you*, like the angels, he created for himself alone, to know him, love him, and serve him here, and to come to dwell with him for ever hereafter. Well might holy David exclaim, with



a heart overflowing with gratitude, "What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou hast made him a little less than the angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, and hast set him over the works of thy hands" (Ps. viii. 5-7).

Let us now see what we have to do in order to fulfil the great end for which God has made us, and so to obtain the eternal reward which he has promised us.

*First.*—We must *know* God, that is, we must know all about him that the Church teaches. This is what is contained in the catechism which you are about to learn. Be attentive, then, to the instructions which I am going to give you. Try to learn the answers of the catechism well by heart, and what is still more important, do your best to understand their meaning, and you will come to *know* all that is necessary about Almighty God.

*Secondly.*—We must *love* God. But how are you to do this? God himself will teach you, if you ask him, and if he sees you trying to be good and obedient children. You should often, therefore, ask God to teach you to love him: "O my good God," you should say to him, "teach me to love thee." Besides, the more that you *know* of God and his Goodness, the more you are sure to *love* him; so that attention to your catechism is a great thing to help you to *love* God as well as to *know* him.

*Thirdly.*—You must not only know and love God, but you must also *serve* him. This you do by keeping his commandments, and doing what you know will please him. Now, these commandments are contained and explained in your catechism, so that the catechism teaches you also how to *serve* God.

You see from this that your catechism teaches you how to get to heaven, since it is by knowing, loving, and serving God here, that you are to come to be happy with him in the eternal kingdom of heaven.

#### STORY OF JOSAPHAT.

A prince, named Josaphat, had lost his way in a forest while hunting. Suddenly he heard some one, at a little distance, singing sweetly. Surprised to hear so lovely a voice in a lonely forest, he

rode towards the spot from which the sound came, but was astonished to find that the voice which had so charmed him was that of a poor leper, whose body was in the last stage of decay. "Alas ! my friend," said the prince, "how can you have the courage to sing in this dreadful condition ?" "My lord," replied the leper, "I have every reason to rejoice. For forty years I have lived in this world, that is to say, my soul has been for forty years confined in this body, which is its prison. The walls of this prison are now falling to pieces, and my soul, set free from these ruins, will soon take her flight towards God, to enjoy, in his company, eternal happiness. I am so overjoyed at this thought that I cannot help raising my voice to heaven on this happy day of my deliverance."—*Mrs. Herbert.*

Q. To whose image and likeness did God make you ?

A. God made me to his own image and likeness.

Almighty God, having determined to create man, determined also to give him a being worthy of the noble end for which he made him. Wherefore, as a painter or artist who wishes to make a beautiful picture or statue, chooses always the most excellent pattern or model from which to copy, so did God, wishing to make man worthy of himself, choose the most perfect model, namely, himself, after which to make him. "And God said, Let us make man to *our image and likeness*" (Gen. i. 26).

Often thank God, my dear children, for his Infinite Goodness in giving you so noble a being, and take care never to stain or deface his image, which he has stamped upon you, by any wilful sin.

Q. Is this likeness in your body or in your soul ?

A. This likeness to God is chiefly in my soul.

Almighty God made you, as you have seen, to his own image and likeness ; but this likeness to God is chiefly *in your souls*. For you are made up, as you know, of soul and body, unlike the angels, who have a soul or spirit only. It is your body which you see, touch, clothe and feed ; but it is your soul which gives life and motion to the body. As long as we are alive, the soul dwells in the body, though we cannot see it ; but when we die, the soul is set free from the body, which returns to the dust, out of which God made it. Now it is plain that it must be in our souls, rather than in our bodies, that we are like to God, since God is a pure Spirit and has no body.

Q. How is your soul like to God?

A. My soul is like to God because it is a spirit, and is immortal.

We come now to consider in what this likeness to God consists. How can these souls of ours, so prone to evil and so imperfect, contained, moreover, within so small a space as the human body, be in any way like to the Great God, who fills the universe, and possesses every possible perfection? And yet it is so, for God, in his wonderful Goodness, has stamped his image on the soul of man. In the same way, then, as a picture, painted by a clever artist, brings to your mind at once the person whom it represents, but yet there is always an immense difference between the person and the picture; so can we perceive at once in the human soul the image of God, though man remains still at an infinite distance from his Creator.

In what, then, does this likeness or resemblance consist? Your catechism tells you that it consists in these two points:—First, the soul *is a spirit*; God is a Spirit. Secondly, the soul *is immortal*; God is Eternal.

In the first place, the soul is a *spirit*, that is to say, a being without a body of its own, though it is sometimes joined to a body, and possessing reason and free will. Thus it is the soul which thinks, and reasons, and acts in us, and makes use of the different members and senses of the body, just as it requires. It sees with the eyes, hears with the ears, thinks and remembers with the brain, tells its thoughts with the tongue, and so of the other senses. In fact, it is the soul which does everything in us that we are said to do; for the body is of itself a lump of senseless clay, and cannot do this or that, or move here or there, unless the soul sets it in motion. Do not you see in all this many points of likeness between the soul and God? I will tell you some of them.

The soul *is a spirit*, made of no material substance.

God *is a pure Spirit*, having no body.

The soul *is the life of the body*.

God *is the life of the world* and of the soul itself.

The soul *sees, hears, and knows* what passes near it; thus I see you move, hear you speak, and know what you are doing, while you are with me in this room.

God *sees, hears, and knows* what takes place in the whole world. Not even the most secret thoughts of man are hidden from his sight.

The soul *remembers many things* that are long since gone by, but which it has once known.

God *knows all things*, both past and future. Past, present, and future are alike to God.

The soul *can choose with a free will* what it will do. For example, you can sit or stand, go there or stay here, as you will ; for God has given you this free will, which is the power of choosing to do one thing rather than another among such things as man is able to do at all.

But God *is free to do all things* whatever he pleases, for his Power has no limits.

The soul of man *loves his parent, his friend, his benefactor*, or, at least, is capable of such love.

God *loves all his creatures* with an infinite love, and has loved them from all eternity.

Thus, our souls are made to the image of God, not only by being spirits, but by having the qualities of spirits—reason, knowledge, memory, free will, the power of loving, &c. It is true that these qualities in us fall infinitely short of the Divine Perfections, that is to say, the soul can do these things in an infinitely less perfect way than that in which God does them ; but still she *can* do them, and so she bears a likeness to that Good God who has given her these admirable qualities.

We come now to the second great point in which the soul is like to God, that is, in being *immortal*.

Q. What do you mean when you say that your soul is immortal ?

A. When I say that my soul is immortal, I mean that my soul can never die.

Yes ; the meaning of the word *immortal* is that which *can never die* or is not liable to death. *Mortal*, on the contrary, means deadly, or what *is* liable to death. Hence we call ourselves with reason “poor mortals,” because we are liable to death, as regards our bodies ; though we might also call ourselves immortal, speaking of our souls, because our souls will never die. If our first parents had

not committed sin by eating of the forbidden fruit in the garden of paradise, our bodies would not die either, because Almighty God had placed in the midst of that garden a tree, called the tree of life, by eating of the fruit of which our bodies would have been preserved constantly in health and strength ; but by the sin of Adam and Eve death entered into the world. Do not, however, think that, when the body dies and is put into the grave, and becomes the food of worms, the soul dies too. No ; the soul continues to exist without the body until the day of the General Judgment, when God will raise up the body out of the dust, and unite it with the soul once more, to share in its eternal reward or punishment.

There is one kind of death, however, which the soul does die, and that is *the death of sin*. When we fall into mortal sin, our souls are dead in the sight of God, because they are deprived of God's grace and love, and are not able to do anything that will obtain for us a reward hereafter. They still continue to exist, it is true, but only for eternal punishment, unless God restores them to the life of grace by a miracle of his Goodness.

#### THE EMPEROR'S PET STAG.

A certain Roman emperor had a favourite stag which he had succeeded in taming, and which had become much attached to its imperial master. During the day it roamed at large in the neighbouring forests, but returned at certain times to the palace to receive its food. Fearful that it might go astray, and that he might lose an animal which he prized so much, the emperor placed round its neck a golden collar bearing the inscription, "Touch me not ; I belong to Cæsar." No one, he thought, would dare to steal or injure it when they perceived that he had marked it for his own.

Now, Almighty God has acted to us in the same way as the Roman emperor to his pet stag. He has stamped his Divine image on our souls ; our will, our memory, our understanding, our whole soul, all bear the mark that we come from God and belong to God. When, therefore, the devil presumes to attack us, let us bid him begone, saying, "Touch me not ; I belong to God."—*Duty of a Christian*.

Q. Of which must you take most care, of your body or of your soul ?

A. I must take most care of my soul : for Christ has said,

“What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?” (Matt. xvi. 26.)

The soul being the noblest portion of man's nature, made to the image and likeness of God himself, and endowed with so many admirable qualities, it stands to reason that we ought to take far more care of it than of the body, which, though a beautiful work of God's hands, is, after all, without the soul, but a piece of senseless clay. But there is another reason why we should take more care of the soul than of the body. If the soul is saved, the body will be saved too, and will enjoy, together with the soul, the eternal delights of heaven; but if the soul be lost by sin, the body will have to endure, along with the soul, the eternal torments of hell. Wherefore our B. Lord, wishing to impress upon his disciples the importance of attending to the salvation of their souls above all things else, said to them one day, “*What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?*”

You see, then, my dear children, how senseless those are, who neglect their souls, and think only of pleasing and indulging their bodies. They spend days and weeks in foolish pleasures and empty vanities, or in heaping up riches, which in a little time they must leave behind them, and they cannot spare half-an-hour every day for their morning and night prayers, a short time on Sunday for hearing Mass and receiving instructions, or a few hours each month for going to Confession and Holy Communion. And yet these are the very things which, by helping to save the soul, would procure for the body also the eternal delights of heaven.

Q. What must you do to save your soul?

A. To save my soul I must worship God by Faith, Hope, and Charity: that is, I must believe in him, I must hope in him, and I must love him with my whole heart.

We have seen from the last answer that the salvation of our souls is of all things the most necessary, since, if we were to gain the whole world, it would profit us nothing at all, if at the same time we were to suffer the

loss of our souls. Hence our B. Lord calls the salvation of our souls the *one thing necessary* (Luke x. 42), because if we save our souls, *all* is saved ; but if we lose them, all is lost for eternity. What, then, must we do to be sure of saving our souls ? The catechism tells us that we *must worship God*, and that this worship consists of three things, namely, *Faith, Hope, and Charity*. For God has placed us in this world, as we have already seen, to know him, to love him, and to serve him ; or, in other words, to worship him by Faith, Hope, and Charity, since it is by Faith that we know him, and by Hope and Charity that we love him and serve him. Therefore, the worship of God, that is to say, all religion, consists in these three virtues. They are the greatest of the virtues, and contain in themselves all the others ; they will, therefore, be all explained in your catechism.

#### ST. IGNATIUS AND ST. FRANCIS XAVIER.

At the time when St. Ignatius was pursuing his studies at Paris, he became acquainted with Francis Xavier, a gay young nobleman who happened to be studying at the same college. Ignatius, perceiving the noble qualities of mind and heart which his young friend possessed, was bent upon gaining him to God ; but as Xavier was at that time occupied only with thoughts of ambition and a desire of distinguishing himself in the world, Ignatius found that all his good advice was unavailing. He therefore contented himself with repeating to Xavier, from time to time, the words of our Lord, "What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul ?" Francis, who had at first treated the advice of Ignatius with contempt, and rallied him on his devout and mortified life, began at length seriously to reflect on the words which his friend so often repeated. Applying them to his own case, he began to ask himself what indeed it would profit him to obtain all his ambitious desires, if in the end he lost his soul amid the dangers of the world. This consideration made so deep an impression on his mind that, following the impulse of grace, he put himself under the direction of St. Ignatius, entered the Society of Jesus, and became an illustrious saint and the apostle of the Indies.—*Butler's Saints' Lives*.

## SECOND INSTRUCTION.

CHAPTER II.—*Faith—Its Nature—Its Motives—Its Object—The Catholic Church—The Apostles' Creed—Division of the Creed.*

You have already learnt, my dear children, that in order to fulfil the end for which you were made, and to save you souls, you must worship God by Faith, Hope, and Charity. The whole of the catechism is about these three virtues ; it is all taken up in teaching how you are to believe in God, to hope in him, and to love him. At present we have to speak of Faith, which goes before and is the foundation of Hope and Charity. Hence the first part of the catechism, which teaches us why we are to believe in God and what we are to believe concerning him, is headed *Faith*, while later on you will find the words *Hope* and *Charity* placed at the commencement of the chapters which explain to us the nature and practice of those two great virtues.

Q. What is faith ?

A. Faith is a supernatural gift of God, which enables us to believe without doubting whatever God has revealed.

Q. Why must you believe whatever God has revealed ?

A. I must believe whatever God has revealed, because God is the very truth, and can neither deceive nor be deceived.

Yes, *Faith* is a *gift of God*, for he bestows it on us out of his own pure Goodness, and without any merit or claim on our part. But why do we say, a *supernatural* gift ? What is the meaning of that long, hard word, *supernatural* ? It only means "something which is above the power of our nature," just as the word *unnatural* means "that which is against the feelings of our nature," and *natural*, "what belongs to or is a part of our nature." I will explain this to you a little more fully, for the word *supernatural* is one which you will often hear, and once well learnt, it is learnt for ever.

Do you know, first of all, what our nature consists of ? I told you last Sunday that it consists of a soul and a



body, and it is called the *human* nature, or the nature of man. There are other natures beside our own ; there is the nature of the angels, which consists of a spirit only, and the nature of the animals, which consists simply of a body with life. Almighty God, then, having given us the nature of man, has thereby bestowed upon us certain gifts which belong to the human nature, such as sight, hearing, free will, understanding, &c. These gifts, being part of our nature, are called *natural* gifts. But there are other gifts which God gives us, which do not belong to our nature but are far above it, such as to believe in him, to love him, to do good works, &c. Now these are called *supernatural* gifts, because they are far beyond the power of our human nature, unassisted by Almighty God.

You will now understand what the catechism means when it says, that *Faith is a supernatural gift of God*. It adds, *which enables us*, that is, which makes us able, *to believe without doubting whatever God has revealed*. Faith is *to believe*, and hence you find that acts of faith, that is, prayers expressing our faith, usually begin with the words, "I believe." Thus the Apostles' Creed, which is an act of faith, begins with these words, "I believe in God the Father Almighty." And the act of faith which comes among the three acts of faith, hope, and charity in your morning prayers, begins, "I firmly believe there is one God."

Faith, then, is *believing*. But what do we mean by believing? To believe, my dear children, is *to receive a thing as true on the word of another*. If we know anything by our own experience, for example, by seeing, hearing, feeling, or tasting, then it is not believing, but it is seeing, &c. Thus if you took a bite of an orange and found it sour, you would not say, "I believe that this orange is sour," but, "Oh ! this orange tastes very sour." If, on the other hand, I were to say to you, "Don't touch that orange, it is sour," and you were to take it for granted that it was so *on my word*, then that would be believing, because it would be receiving a thing as true on the word of another.

I have now explained to you what *believing* is ; but

notice one very important thing, and it is this. You may believe a thing to be true, because *man* tells it you, or because *God* tells it you. If you believe it because *man* tells it you, it is a mere human belief, it is not the virtue of Faith. You feel pretty sure that it is as the person tells you, but still you think it just possible that he may have made a mistake. For example, if I told you, "That orange is sour," you would probably believe me, because you would not think it likely that I should tell you a story, but you would perhaps be inclined to doubt whether I might not be mistaken after all, as I had not tasted it. If, however, you believe anything on the word of God, then there is no room for doubt,—no possibility of mistake. You take it at once for granted, *without doubting* it for a moment, because you know that God is Truth itself, and that it is impossible to suppose either that he could deceive you or be deceived himself. *Man* might be deceived or mistaken, and might even wish to mislead others; but *God*, as he knows all things, could not be deceived, and, being Goodness, Holiness, Justice, and Truth itself, could not wish to deceive us. It is sufficient, therefore, to know that God has revealed anything, for us instantly to accept it with a most firm belief. You will now understand what is necessary for the virtue of Faith.

*First.*—Our belief must be firm, unshaken, an absolute certainty, *without doubting* or wavering.

*Secondly.*—It must be a belief *in all that God has revealed* or made known to man.

#### THE FIREMAN'S DAUGHTER.

A large number of children were assembled at their lessons in a public schoolroom a few years since, when suddenly an alarm was given that the house was on fire. The children ran here and there in the greatest terror, seeking everywhere for the means of escape, and one of the pupil teachers was so terrified that she threw herself from the window of the room, which was on the second story, into the street below. In the midst of the general alarm, it was remarked that one of the little girls never attempted to escape, and though excessively pale and trembling, never stirred from the form where she was seated. When the alarm was discovered to be unfounded and order was restored, the schoolmistress asked the little

girl how it was that she had sat so still the whole time, while every one else had been trying to escape. "Please, ma'am," said she, "it's because father is a fireman, and has often told me, if ever there was an alarm of fire, to sit quite still."—*Newspaper*.

This story will show you very clearly what *believing* is, and it contains also a useful lesson for every Christian. The little girl, though very frightened, knew it was better to sit still, and how did she know it? Because *her father* had told her so, and he was a *fireman*. Being her father, he loved her too much; and being a fireman, he was too clever to deceive her. She therefore never doubted the truth of what he told her. This was *believing*, but it was only *human faith*, because it was *man* whom she believed and not God.

Learn, my dear children, from the example of this little girl, to cherish in your hearts the truths which your Heavenly Father teaches you by his Church, and to follow as faithfully his instructions as the fireman's daughter did the warnings of her earthly father. In doing so you are exercising *Divine Faith*; since it is *God* whom you believe, God, who being your Father, would not deceive you, and who cannot be mistaken, because he knows all things.

#### THE MAN BORN BLIND.

It is related in the Gospel, that when our B. Redeemer had cured the blind man at the pool of Siloe, the Pharisees through envy and jealousy persecuted him who had been cured, and expelled him from their church or synagogue. At that time he did not yet know that our Lord was the Christ and the Son of God, but thought only that he was some good and holy prophet. When Jesus, however, had heard that they had cast him out, "he said to him, *Dost thou believe in the Son of God?* He answered and said, *Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?* And Jesus said to him, *Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.* And he said, *I believe, Lord;* and falling down he adored him" (John ix.).

Behold here a beautiful example of Divine Faith, and of that prompt and entire belief which is due to the Word of God. The blind man already regarded our Lord as a prophet or messenger from God, but he no sooner heard from him that he was the Son of God himself, than

he expressed his belief, fell down and adored him, and remained to listen to his teaching.

#### NOBLE SAYING OF THE KING OF BUNGO.

Among the numerous converts gathered into the Church in the island of Japan by the preaching of St. Francis Xavier, was the king of Bungo, one of the Japanese provinces, his conversion being followed by that of many thousands of his people, and even of some of the neighbouring princes. A severe storm was soon after raised against the Christian religion, the missionaries being assailed with odious calumnies, and every effort being made to destroy the faith of the recent converts. Upon this occasion the king of Bungo made the following noble and solemn protest: "I swear in your presence, O Almighty God, that if all the fathers of the Society of Jesus, by whose ministry you have called me to Christianity, should renounce their own teaching, and even if I were assured that all the Christians of Europe had denied your Name, I would still confess, acknowledge, and adore you as the Only, True, Almighty God of the universe, and this even at the cost of my life."—*Annals of Prop. of Faith.*

Q. How are you to know what God has revealed?

A. I am to know what God has revealed by the testimony, teaching, and authority of the Catholic Church.

Q. Who gave the Catholic Church authority to teach?

A. Jesus Christ gave the Catholic Church Divine authority to teach when he said, "Go ye, and teach all nations" (Matt. xxviii. 19).

Almighty God, who has created us to *know* him, and has commanded us to worship him by the virtue of Faith, has not left us without the means of learning what those truths are which he requires us to believe. First of all, he spoke to Adam and Eve in the garden of paradise; then to the holy patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; afterwards to Moses on Mount Sinai; and later on he taught the Jews by the mouth of his inspired prophets and by the Jewish Church. But all this was only to prepare the way for his Divine Son, who came to teach us more fully by his life and public preaching, and to establish his Church, which should continue to teach in his name till the end of time.

While our B. Lord was still upon earth, he himself taught Divine truth to man by word of mouth; but as he was not to remain always visibly here below, it

entered into the order of his Providence to commit to others the charge of continuing the same work, when he should have ascended into heaven. For this purpose he chose from among those who came to listen to his teaching, twelve disciples, called Apostles, whom he ordained Priests, and to whom he gave power to say Mass, administer the Sacraments, and teach mankind what they had to believe, and what they had to do, in order to gain heaven. Among these Apostles he appointed one, viz., St. Peter, in his own place, to be the head of the others, and gave him authority to rule and govern his Church. Thus did our Lord found and establish his Church; and as he established it not for the people of that time only, but for all future ages, he gave his Apostles power to ordain Bishops and Priests after them, as they had been ordained by him, who should exercise the same powers, and continue the same work of teaching and administering the Sacraments until the end of time.

You see from this, my dear children, that there can be only one true religion, namely, that founded by Jesus Christ. This is, as you know, the Catholic religion, to which you have the happiness to belong, since the Catholic Church alone comes down from the time of the Apostles, and acknowledges the Pope, the successor of St. Peter, as its visible head. It is this Church, which, as your catechism says, gives *testimony*, that is to say, bears witness as to what was taught by Christ and his Apostles; and it is *her* pastors, the Bishops and Priests, the successors of the Apostles, who alone have *authority* from Christ *to teach all nations* in his name. "As the Father hath sent me," he said to his Apostles, "I also send you" (John xx. 21). "Going, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20).

#### ST. JOHN AND ST. POLYCARP.

Our B. Lord predicted, before his Passion, that the days would

quickly come, when false teachers would arise and make every effort to mislead his disciples. Even in the lifetime of the Apostles this prophecy was fulfilled, for we read in the life of St. John, the beloved disciple of our Lord, that he wrote his Gospel to refute the errors of Ebion and Cerinthus, who had attacked the doctrine of our Lord's Incarnation. It is related by St. Irenæus, who says he heard it from the mouth of St. Polycarp, one of St. John's disciples, that that holy Apostle chanced on a certain occasion to enter one of the Roman baths, not knowing that the heretic or false teacher Cerinthus was at that very moment within the building. Being informed of this circumstance, in order to inspire his disciples with a wholesome horror of false doctrine, which is so grievous a sin in the sight of God, he hastily fled away, saying, "Let us begone, my brethren, lest the building which contains Cerinthus, the enemy of the Truth, should fall upon our heads."

So Polycarp, St. John's disciple, showed the same horror of false teachers as his blessed master. Meeting one day in the streets of Rome the heretic Marcion, with whom he had in former times been very friendly, he passed him by without noticing him. Marcion, thinking that he had not observed him, came up and said to him, "Do you not know me, Polycarp?" "Yes," replied the holy Bishop, "I know you to be the first-born of Satan."

From these examples we see what the Apostles and Saints thought of those who presumed to call in question the authority of the Church of God.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

Q. What are the chief things which God has revealed?

A. The chief things which God has revealed are contained in the Apostles' Creed.

You have already learnt, my dear children, that it is by the Church, which his Divine Son founded and established on earth, that God makes known to us what those things are which he requires us to believe. The Apostles, who were the first pastors of the Church, received these truths from the lips of Jesus Christ himself, and have handed them down to their successors and to us. Some of the most important and necessary of these truths are contained in the *Apostles' Creed*, or "I believe," which was, there is little doubt, composed by the Apostles themselves. It is said that they made it before they separated to preach over the world, and that they agreed to teach it everywhere to those whom they converted, as a solemn act of faith. The room, or rather cave, where they are said to have assembled on this occasion, is still pointed out in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and is visited

with great veneration. From that day to this, the Apostles' Creed has been used among Christians in every country and in every age. Even Protestants and Methodists make use of it, for they believe with us that it came down from the time of the Apostles. It is called *Creed*, from the Latin word *credo*, meaning "I believe ;" so that the Apostles' Creed means, in other words, the Belief, or act of faith taught by the Apostles.

Q. Say the Apostles' Creed.

A. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth ;—and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord ;—who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary ;—suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried ;—he descended into hell ; the third day he rose again from the dead ;—he ascended into heaven ; sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty ;—from thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.—I believe in the Holy Ghost ;—the Holy Catholic Church ; the communion of Saints ;—the forgiveness of sins ;—the resurrection of the body ;—and life everlasting.—Amen.

I told you just now that the Apostles' Creed is a solemn act or profession of our faith, namely, that we believe the same truths which our B. Lord taught to his Apostles. When you were little infants, and were taken to the church to be baptized, you were first asked by the Priest whether you believed all the truths which are contained in the Apostles' Creed, for no one can become the child of God by Baptism, until he first receives the teaching of Jesus Christ and his Church. As you had not then sense enough to answer for yourselves, your godfather and god-mother answered for you, that you did believe ; and as a proof of it, they repeated aloud in your name the "I believe." Since that time you have learnt to repeat it yourselves, and have been taught to say it daily in your morning and night prayers, in order that the truths contained therein may be continually before your eyes, and may sink deeply into your hearts.

You do not know, I daresay, that there are other creeds, or professions of faith, besides the Apostles' Creed. These have been composed by the Church at different times to express her belief more fully in doctrines which have

been denied, or called in question, by wicked men. Have you ever heard any of these creeds? Yes, you have heard one very often; I mean the Nicene Creed, for it is frequently said by the Priest at Mass, at that part of the Mass when all the people are standing up after the gospel. I daresay you remember the first words of it, "*Credo in unum Deum*," "I believe in one God." It is called the Nicene Creed, because it was composed at the general council or assembly of Catholic Bishops, held at Nicæa about three hundred years after the time of our B. Lord. There is also the Athanasian Creed, and the Creed of Pope Pius. These creeds are longer than the Apostles' Creed, because they contain a fuller explanation of Catholic doctrine, but they are just the same in substance. Thus the Apostles' Creed begins, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth," while the Nicene Creed says, "I believe in *one* God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, *and of all things visible and invisible*." The words *one* and *of all things visible and invisible* were added by the Church to confute the Manichees and other heretics, who denied that there is only one God, and asserted that God created only *invisible* things, such as our souls, and that all *visible* things, that is, things which can be seen, were made by an evil spirit. In the same way the Athanasian Creed was composed by the great St. Athanasius, to explain the true teaching of the Church against the Arians, and the Creed of Pope Pius to express the belief of the Church in those points of doctrine which had been called in question by Protestants.

Q. How is the Apostles' Creed divided?

A. The Apostles' Creed is divided into twelve parts or articles.

The Apostles' Creed is divided *into twelve parts*, which are commonly called *articles*. Each of these articles contains an expression of faith in some great truth which God has revealed or made known to us. Of these truths or articles of our faith, some relate to the three Persons of the B. Trinity, and some to other doctrines of the Church.

First of all, we declare our belief in what the Church



teaches us about God the Father, and this is contained in the first article, "I believe," &c.

In the next six articles we profess our faith in God the Son, and in all that the Church teaches us regarding him. We have more to know and believe about God the Son, because he has made himself more known to us by becoming man. Thus, the second article declares who he is; the third, how he became man; the fourth, his Passion and Death; the fifth, his Resurrection; the sixth, his Ascension; and the seventh, his coming again at the last day to judge us.

We next, in the eighth article, profess our belief in the third Person of the B. Trinity, God the Holy Ghost.

After thus making an act of faith in the three Persons of the B. Trinity, and what the Church teaches regarding them, we, in the four remaining articles, declare our belief in some of the most important doctrines of the Church. The most important of all is put first in the ninth article: "The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints." This article may, indeed, be said to contain the whole Creed in itself, for if we believe in the Catholic Church, we believe in all that she teaches, and the whole of the Creed is about that.

Next comes "the forgiveness of sins" in the tenth article; "the resurrection of the body" in the eleventh, and "life everlasting," the reward and crown of our faith, in the last. These three truths are specially mentioned, because it is particularly important that we should be well instructed in them and ever have them before our eyes.

When you repeat, my dear children, every morning and evening, this beautiful act of faith, you should do so with hearts full of gratitude to God for teaching you how to *know* him by these Divine truths, and with a firm determination to live and die in the bosom of that Church, which he has established to teach and explain them to mankind.

#### THE BENIGHTED TRAVELLER.

A traveller returning to his home from a distant country arrived at nightfall at the entrance of a vast forest. Being unable either to

delay his journey or retrace his steps, he was preparing to traverse it in the dark, when he beheld an old shepherd, from whom he asked the way. "Alas!" said the shepherd, "it is not easy to point it out, for the forest is crossed by hundreds of paths which wind in every direction, and are almost similar in appearance, though all with one exception lead to the abyss." "To what abyss?" said the traveller. "The abyss which surrounds the forest," said the shepherd. "Moreover, the forest is filled with robbers and wild beasts, and is infested in particular with an enormous serpent, which commits dreadful ravages, so that scarcely a day passes but we find the remains of some unhappy travellers who have fallen a prey to it. Still, as it is impossible to arrive at the place you are going to without traversing the forest, I have, through a motive of compassion, stationed myself at the entrance of it to assist and direct travellers. I have also placed my sons at different intervals to assist me in the same good work. Their services and mine are at your disposal, and I am ready to accompany you if you desire it."

The candour and venerable appearance of the old man filled the traveller with confidence, and he at once accepted the proposal. With one hand the shepherd carried the lantern, and with the other he took the arm of the traveller. They then set out upon their journey.

After walking for some distance, the traveller felt his strength begin to fail. "Lean upon me," said the shepherd. He did so, and was able to continue his journey. At length the lamp began to grow dim. "Alas!" said the traveller, "the oil is nearly spent, and the light will soon be extinguished. What will become of us?" "Do not fear," replied the shepherd; "we shall shortly meet with one of my sons, who will supply us with oil." At the same moment they perceived through the darkness the glimmering of a light at a little distance. It proceeded from a small cabin by the side of the path. At the well-known voice of the shepherd, the door was opened. A seat was offered to the weary traveller, and some plain but substantial food was set before him. Thus recruited, he set out again after a short pause, guided by the shepherd's son.

In this manner he journeyed on during the rest of the night, passing from time to time by different cabins built along the path, at all of which he obtained both refreshment and rest, and was furnished with fresh guides. At the dawn of day he arrived, without accident, at the boundary of the forest. Then he perceived the greatness of the service rendered him by the shepherd and his sons. A frightful precipice lay at his feet, at the bottom of which he could distinguish the roar of an angry torrent. "This," said his guide, "is the abyss which my father spoke of. No one knows its depth, for it is always covered with a thick fog, which no eye can penetrate."

As he spoke, he heaved a deep sigh, and wiped away a tear from his eyes. "You appear grieved," said the traveller. "Alas! how can I be otherwise?" replied his guide. "Can I look at the abyss

without thinking of the thousands of unhappy people who are every day swallowed up in it? In vain do my father and ourselves offer our services. Very few accept of them, and of those few the greater portion, after journeying for a few hours, accuse us of alarming them without cause, despise our advice, and leave us. The consequence is, that they soon lose their way, and are devoured by the serpent, murdered by the robbers, or fall headlong into the abyss, for there is only this one little bridge by which it can be crossed, and the way which leads to the bridge is known to us alone. Pass over with confidence," continued he, turning to the traveller and embracing him. "On the other side is your true country." The traveller, overcome with gratitude, thanked his charitable guide, promised never to forget him, and, crossing the bridge, found himself at once in his own country and in the bosom of his family.—*Catéch. de Persév*

My dear children, do you understand the meaning of this beautiful parable? The good shepherd you cannot mistake; he is our B. Lord. His sons are the pastors of the Church, who, succeeding one another, continue his work of guiding the pilgrim safe through the perils and dangers of the world. The one only path which leads to the journey's end is the Catholic Church, which alone leads to heaven; all other roads lead to the abyss. The pilgrim is yourself; the lamp, the light of faith; the oil, the grace of God; and the food and refreshment, the Sacraments of the Church. Then there is the great serpent, who, you know, is the devil; while the robbers and wild beasts are wicked company and our own evil passions. The forest is the world; the bridge, death; the abyss, hell; and the pilgrim's true country, the kingdom of heaven.

How grateful, then, should we be to our Good Shepherd for providing us in his Church with so many means of escaping the dangers that beset us, and arriving at our heavenly kingdom!

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## THIRD INSTRUCTION.

CHAPTER III. — *First Article of the Creed — God the Father—Existence and Nature of God—His Perfections—Omnipotence, Eternity, Omnipresence, and Omniscience—The Unity and Trinity of God.*

Q. What is the first article of the Creed?

A. The first article of the Creed is, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth."

In the first article of the Creed we express our belief in what the Church teaches us about God the Father. We must believe—

*First.*—That he is truly *God*.

*Secondly.*—That he is the *Father*, the first Person of the Blessed Trinity.

*Thirdly.*—That he is *Almighty*, that is, all-powerful.

*Fourthly.*—That he is the *Creator of heaven and earth*.

There are other things which we know and believe about God the Father, but these are the chief and most important. The Catechism, therefore, goes on to explain these truths one by one.

Q. What is God?

A. God is the Supreme Spirit, who alone exists of himself and is infinite in all perfections.

*What is God?* This is a question, my dear children, which has puzzled all the philosophers and wise men who have tried to discover an answer to it by the light of human reason alone; for though human reason may be able to give us some indistinct knowledge of God, it is God alone who can fully teach mankind what he is, neither has he left us in ignorance of what it is necessary for us to know in regard to himself. First of all, he taught our first parents, Adam and Eve, in the garden of Paradise, that he is the One Only God, who made all things, and whom we should ever adore and obey; and our first parents handed down the knowledge of this great truth to their children. But as time went on, the greater part of men became very wicked and corrupt. Their

minds became darkened by sin, they lost the knowledge of the true God, and they began to make gods for themselves, according to their own foolish fancies. Thus, some said that the sun and moon were gods ; others, that great men who had lived on the earth, when they died, became gods ; others, that the earth itself was a god ; others again, that beasts and serpents,—nay, even the very trees and vegetables were gods. And not content with adoring as gods creatures which the Almighty had made to serve for their use and benefit, men went on in their blindness to make gods for themselves out of wood, and stone, and metal, which they carved into certain shapes and figures called idols, and then adored and worshipped as gods. Thus did man fall away from the knowledge of God, and in punishment of his own vices and wilful obstinacy, become a slave to the grievous sin of *idolatry*, that is to say, the worship of false gods and idols. But there was always the light of the true religion enlightening the world, and teaching those who were willing to be taught, all those truths which God had made known about himself. These truths are contained in the answer of your catechism, which you have just repeated.

First of all, *God is the Supreme Spirit*. But what is a spirit ? I told you a little time ago that a spirit is a being possessing understanding and free will, that is, the power of knowing and willing, but without a body. It has, therefore, neither shape, nor size, nor colour, nor any of the properties of a body. Our souls are spirits, the angels are spirits, God is a Spirit ; but, oh ! what a vast difference between Almighty God and all other spirits, which are the work of his Divine Hands ! For he is not, like our souls, confined within a little body, nor, like the angels, present only in certain places ; nor is he, like both one and the other, subject to or dependent on any one ; but he is the One Great Spirit, who fills the whole universe, and who rules and governs all things, wherefore he is called the *Supreme* or *Highest Spirit*.

*Secondly*.—God *alone exists of himself*. All things have their being or existence from God, but God from no one. God made all things, but no one made God. And not

only did God give us our being when he made us, but he is continually giving it us; for were it not for him ever supporting and upholding us, we should in a moment fall back into that nothing out of which he made us. Hence, the Holy Scripture says that "in him we live, and move, and be" (Acts xvii. 28). But, as to Almighty God, nothing upholds or supports him, for he is Being itself, giving being and existence to all his creatures.

*Thirdly.*—God is infinite in all perfections,—that is to say, not only is he Good, Wise, Powerful, &c., but his Goodness, Wisdom, and Power have no limit; in other words, he is All Good, All Wise, All Powerful, and so of his other perfections. For these, namely, Goodness, Wisdom, Power, &c., are what are called the perfections of God. We call them good *qualities* when we speak of man, but when we speak of God we call them *perfections*. But notice that whatever wisdom, power, goodness, or other good quality man may possess, it is only very small and limited, and besides it comes from God. God, on the other hand, possesses all these perfections in an infinite degree, that is, without bound or limit. Moreover, he possesses them of his own nature, they belong to him of his own right,—nay, they are God himself.

#### THE BURNING BUSH.

When Moses was keeping the flocks of his father-in-law Jethro, he came to Mount Horeb, which is called in Holy Scripture the *Mountain of God*. Here the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush, and Moses saw that the bush was on fire and was not burnt. And he said, "*I will go and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.*"

"And when the Lord saw that he went forward to see, he called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said, *Moses, Moses*. And he answered, *Here I am*. And he said, *Come not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground*. Moses hid his face, for he durst not look at God."

Then the Lord told him that he had seen the affliction of his people in Egypt, and was about to send him to deliver them from their oppressors, and lead them into a land flowing with milk and honey.

Then Moses said to God, "'Lo, I shall go to the children of Israel, and say to them, *The God of your fathers hath sent me to you.*'"

If they should say to me, *What is his name? what shall I say to them?* God said to Moses, *'I am who am.'* Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel, *'He who is hath sent me to you'*" (Exod. iii.).

*I am who am.* Beautiful words, my dear children, which show us at once the Greatness of God and our own littleness. *God is what he is* by his own nature and Power. But "I am," each of us might say, "not what I am, for I am nothing, and have no being or existence of myself, but simply and only what God has made me."

#### KING HIERO AND THE PHILOSOPHER.

Hiero, king of Syracuse, being eager in the pursuit of wisdom, one day asked the philosopher Simonides, "What is God?" Simonides requested to be allowed a day to consider his answer. On the following day the king repeated his question, but the philosopher begged for another day, saying that he had not been yet able to discover the answer. Being again asked on the third day, he requested a further delay, and having done the same for several days in succession, he at length excused himself altogether, saying, "The more I think of this sublime subject, the less I am able to explain it."—*Cicero.*

#### THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON.

The great Emperor Napoleon, in the days of his prosperity and his earthly glory, thought little of God, or of the practice of his religious duties. He was not, however, without faith, and afterwards, in the solitude of his captivity at St. Helena, became convinced of the vanity of the world, and returned to the practice of his religion. It was then that he made that beautiful answer to some one who asked him which had been the happiest day of his life. Was it the day of his victory at Lodi, or of that at Marengo; or was it rather the day of his triumphal entrance into Dresden or Vienna? "You are mistaken," he replied; "it was not any of these days, it was the day of my first Communion."

It happened one day that one of his officers, in his presence, impiously mocked at religion, and asked him, in a jesting way, how he could believe that there was a God, when he had never seen him. "Listen, and I will tell you," said Napoleon. "You say that I have a talent for war. When we used to go to battle, if there was any important movement to be made, you were the first to come and look for me, and every one cried out, 'Where is the Emperor?' And why so? It was because you trusted in my talent; yet you had never seen it. Did you, then, doubt its existence? No, because you had seen its effects. My victories proved that it existed, and hence no one called it in question. But which of my victories

could be compared to any of the wonders of the creation, which all bear testimony to the existence of God? What military movement can bear any comparison with the movement of the heavenly bodies? My victories made you believe in me; the universe makes me believe in God.”—*Derniers Moments de Napoléon*.

Q. Why is God called Almighty?

A. God is called “Almighty” because he can do all things: “With God all things are possible” (Matt. xix. 26).

God is All Powerful, my dear children, and it is for this reason that we speak of him as the *Almighty* God. It is his Divine Son himself, who declares that “*with God all things are possible*.” In other words *he can do all things* whatever he pleases, however difficult or impossible they may appear to man. What could appear more difficult than to make the earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars? And yet God made them all out of nothing in an instant of time. “He spoke, and they were made; he commanded, and they were created” (Ps. cxlviii. 5). He said, “*Be light made*, and light was made; *let the waters be gathered together in one place*, and it was so done” (Gen. i. 3, 9). At his word, in a moment of time, all the heavenly bodies moved in their appointed courses; the whole earth was covered with a countless variety of herbs and shrubs and trees; the sea was peopled with fish, the air with birds, and the land with living animals, and man, the masterpiece of God’s hands. How weak and feeble are all the efforts of man compared with these wonderful works of the Great Creator! With all his power and skill, what man can make a blade of grass?—much less a living animal,—not even a gnat or a fly!

But is there nothing at all, you may perhaps ask, which God cannot do? Yes, there is one thing; God cannot sin. Could he do this, he would be no longer God, for God is Holiness itself, which is the very opposite of sin. Besides, sin is an imperfection, and to be able to commit it would not show that God is Powerful, but, on the contrary, would prove him to be weak, since it would show that God might be overcome by the devil, the author of sin.



## CANUTE'S REBUKE TO HIS COURTIER.

The flatterers of King Canute, eager to gain the royal favour, styled him not only King of England, but Lord of the sea ; " the very elements," they said, " were subject to his command." Wishing to read them a lesson, Canute ordered his chair of state to be placed at the edge of the water, and there took his seat. The tide was then coming up, and the King, in a tone of majesty, ordered it to retire, that it might not wet its lord and master. The waves, however, advanced rapidly, and soon flowed over the King's knees. Then rising and turning to his confused nobles, Canute said to them, " Confess how vain and empty is the power of an earthly king compared with his, who alone can say to the waves, *Thus far shall ye go, and no further.*" Then, taking the crown off his head, he went and deposited it on the great crucifix in the cathedral of Winchester, nor did he ever again wear it. From that day forward he studied only to advance in humility and meekness, and ended a glorious reign by a saintly death.—*History of England.*

Q. Why is God called Creator of heaven and earth ?

A. God is called " Creator of heaven and earth " because he made heaven and earth, and all things, out of nothing, by his word.

God made heaven and earth and all things out of nothing by his word. This is the plain and simple truth, which God himself has revealed to us respecting the creation. The world, then, was made by God ; it did not make itself, nor was it made by chance, as some philosophers have foolishly said. For how could the world make itself, or have existence, unless it had received it from another ? Or how could this vast and beautiful universe, those magnificent heavenly bodies, the countless living animals with which the earth is peopled, and man himself, have been made by chance, which is nothing ? Did chance ever make the spring and wheels of a watch, put them together, and cause them to tell the time ? Or did chance ever build a house and furnish it ? If, then, it requires an intelligent being, that is, a being capable of thinking and knowing, to make a watch or build a house, much more does it require an Almighty and All-Wise Being to make this vast universe and all that it contains !

God then made the world, or, rather, he created it. For to create is to make out of nothing, which only God can do. Man requires bricks and mortar to build a house, silver and brass to make a watch, wood to construct a

ship, &c. But God *made all things out of nothing by his word.* He made *heaven*, by which we mean that beautiful place where the saints and angels dwell, as also the sky above which we sometimes call heaven, and those bright heavenly bodies the sun, the moon, and the stars, which shed light and heat into this world of ours. He also made the *earth*, where we dwell, clothed it with fresh and beautiful verdure, and peopled it with various animals and with man himself.

Admire, my dear children, the infinite Power and Wisdom of God as shown in the creation; love and thank him for his Goodness in creating so many wonders for your use; and be afraid ever to offend so Great and Mighty a God by wilful sin.

#### THE CREATION IN SIX DAYS.

**FIRST DAY.**—"In the beginning God created heaven and earth. And the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved over the waters. And God said, *Be light made.* And light was made. And God divided the light from the darkness. And he called the light Day, and the darkness Night."

**SECOND DAY.**—"And God said, *Let there be a firmament made amidst the water, and let it divide the waters from the waters.* And it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven."

**THIRD DAY.**—"God also said, *Let the waters that are under the heaven be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.* And it was so done. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters he called Seas. And God said, *Let the earth bring forth the green herb and the fruit tree.* And it was so done."

**FOURTH DAY.**—"And God said, *Let there be lights made in the firmament of heaven to divide the day and the night, and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years.* And it was so done. And God made two great lights, a greater light to rule the day, and a lesser light to rule the night, and the stars."

**FIFTH DAY.**—"God also said, *Let the waters bring forth the creeping creature, and the fowl, that may fly over the earth.* And God created the great whales, and every living and moving creature which the waters bring forth, and every winged fowl. And he blessed them, saying, *Increase and multiply.*"

**SIXTH DAY.**—"And God said, *Let the earth bring forth the cattle and creeping things, and beasts of the earth.* And it was so done. And he said, *Let us make man to our image and likeness; and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and*

*the beasts, and the whole earth.* And God created man to his own image ; to the image of God he created him ; male and female he created them."

SEVENTH DAY.—"And on the seventh day God ended the work which he had made ; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. And he blessed the seventh day and sanctified it" (Gen. i., ii.).

Q. Had God any beginning ?

A. No ; God had no beginning ; he always was, he is, and he always will be.

God alone had no beginning, my dear children ; *he always was, he is, and he always will be.* From all eternity he existed, and he will continue to exist for ever. We also shall exist for ever, for he has made us in this to his own likeness. Our souls, as you have seen, are immortal, and can never die ; and when our bodies rise again at the last day, they will be immortal too, and will go with our souls to eternal happiness or eternal misery. But God is more than immortal ; he is *Eternal*. Not only *will* he exist for ever, but he *has* existed for ever. He had no beginning, and he will have no end. All other things had a beginning. There was a time when neither this earth, nor the sun, moon, or stars, nor angels, nor men, existed ; but there never was a time when God did not exist. From all eternity he existed alone in the universe. At length, in his Goodness, he began to create, and made first the angels, and then the world, and man. Before God began to create, time was not counted ; nor will it be counted after the day of judgment. And even now there is no time in regard to God himself ; everything past, present, and to come, is equally present to him.

How thankful ought we to be to our good God who has created us, not for the few miserable years that we shall spend in this life, but for eternity, which will be an eternity of happiness for us, if we love him now, and keep his commandments !

Q. Where is God ?

A. God is everywhere.

Yes ; Almighty God is *everywhere* present, and he is

everywhere equally present. He is not more present in heaven, where the angels and saints see, love, and enjoy him, than he is in this room ; only he is visible to them and invisible to us. We cannot see him, because God is a Spirit, and a spirit cannot be seen with bodily eyes ; but he is no less truly present wherever we are, and indeed it is to the presence of God that we owe our being and preservation. For nothing can exist out of God ; it is God who upholds and supports all his creatures by his Presence and Power. Wherefore the Holy Scripture says that it is “in him we live, and move, and be” (Acts xvii. 28).

If, then, my dear children, you were to take a ship and cross the sea, or mount a camel and pass over the desert, or even if you could take wings and fly to the very end of the world, Almighty God would be with you wherever you went, and wherever you came to, you would find yourself in the presence of God. Nay, if you could mount to the moon, to the sun, or to the stars, whose distance is so great that it cannot be calculated, still you could not go out of the presence of God, but everywhere would you find Almighty God filling all space, and yet present equally in every portion of it, with all his Divine Perfections. Wherefore holy David says beautifully, in one of the Psalms :

“Whither shall I go from thy Spirit ? or whither shall I flee from thy face ?

“If I ascend into heaven, thou art there ;

“If I descend into hell, thou art present ;

“If I take my wings early in the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me” (Ps. cxxxviii. 7-10).

See, then, how much reason the good have to rejoice, since they have him always with them who is their Friend and their Father ; and how much cause the wicked have to tremble, since they are ever in the presence of an Almighty and infinitely Just God, whom they have disobeyed and insulted !

## WHERE GOD IS, AND WHERE HE IS NOT.

A priest was one day catechising a number of children, and among other things he asked a little boy the question I have just asked you, *Where is God?* "Come, my child," said the priest, "tell me where God is, and I will give you an orange." "Father," replied the boy, "I will give any one two oranges who will tell me where he is not."—*Anecdotes Chrétiennes*.

Q. Does God know and see all things?

A. Yes; God knows and sees all things, even our most secret thoughts.

Almighty God, being everywhere present, and being a God of Infinite Wisdom and Knowledge, it follows that there is nothing of which he can be ignorant, or which can be hidden from his sight. Not only does he know and see outward things, such as our words and actions, but even the most secret thoughts of our hearts. Hence, the Holy Scripture says that "the eyes of the Lord are far brighter than the sun, beholding round about all the ways of men, and looking into the hearts of men, into the most hidden parts" (Eccles. xxiii. 28). It matters not, therefore, whether you be alone or with your companions, at home or in the streets, in the daylight or in the darkness, God sees you everywhere, and beholds all your thoughts, words, and actions.

Since, then, my dear children, you are ever living under the Eye of God, how careful should you be not to do anything that you would not wish God to behold! How thoughtful and attentive should this make you at your prayers! how kind and good-natured with your companions! how modest and well-behaved when alone or with others! how careful to put away any temptation that presents itself! These few words, *God sees me*, should sink deep into your hearts, and you should call them to mind whenever you are tempted to sin, according to the example of holy David. Listen to his words:

"And I said, 'Perhaps darkness shall cover me, and night shall be my light in my pleasures;'

"But darkness shall not be dark to thee, and night shall be light as the day. The darkness thereof and the light thereof are alike to thee" (Ps. cxxxviii. 11, 12).

## ST. THAIS THE PENITENT.

St. Thais, who, like St. Mary of Egypt, from a sinner became a saint through the perfect practice of penance, had the misfortune, in her youth, to be led away into a criminal and abandoned life. The holy abbot Paphnucius, hearing of her sad condition, and of the scandal given to others by her wicked conduct, was inspired by God to undertake her conversion. He accordingly visited her in disguise, and asked to speak to her privately. She showed him into a room where she said they would meet with no interruption. Paphnucius, however, asked if she had not a more retired apartment. She conducted him to one, but he expressed himself still dissatisfied, asking if there was not a room where they would be out of sight and hearing of every one. "I assure you," replied Thais, "no room can be more retired ; no man can possibly see or hear us." "And what of God?" said Paphnucius. "Is there no place where we can escape altogether from his All-Seeing Eye?" "Alas ! no," replied Thais, casting herself at the feet of Paphnucius, whom she now perceived to be a servant of God. The holy man hereupon spoke to her so forcibly on the presence of God and the terrors of the Divine judgment, that Thais, detesting her wicked life, made a bonfire of all her worldly ornaments, and retiring into the desert, spent the rest of her life in the practice of the most austere penance.—*Lives of the Fathers of the Desert.*

Q. Has God any body ?

A. No ; God has no body : he is a pure spirit.

Almighty God has no body, for he *is a pure spirit* ; that is to say, he is a spirit only, and not partly a spirit and partly a body, as we are. You see, then, that the word *pure*, in this place, does not mean clean or white, as it often does ; but it means, "not mixed with anything else," as we say of water when it is not mixed with wine or any other liquid, that it is pure water ; but when it is mixed, we say that it is no longer pure. Now, our souls are not pure spirits, in this sense, because they are mixed up, as it were, with our bodies ; but the angels are, because they have no bodies.

As Almighty God, then, is a pure spirit, it follows that we cannot have any true picture of God, because he has no form or body to be painted ; but we may have a picture of God made man, because then he had the form and body of man. And whenever God is painted in any form, or spoken of as having one, it is either because he has sometime taken that form to show himself to man, as,

for example, the form of a dove, or it is to make us understand better something about God. Thus, when God is represented by an eye looking down on the earth, it is to remind us that he knows and sees everything that passes in the world.

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## FOURTH INSTRUCTION.

*First Article concluded—The Unity and Trinity of God.*

Q. Is there more than one God ?

A. No ; there is only one God.

*There is only one God.* This is the first and most necessary truth for a Christian to be instructed in. It is one of those four truths, without the knowledge and belief of which, it is probable that no one can be saved. In like manner, it is necessary to know and believe—

That there are three Persons in this one God ;

That God the Son became man and died to redeem us ;  
and

That God will one day reward the good and punish the wicked.

As the knowledge of these truths is so strictly necessary, it is a great charity, my dear children, to teach them to any one who does not know them. You perhaps think that there is no one so ignorant as not to know this much ; but, alas ! there are many, even at the present day, who are ignorant of some one or other of these truths.

There is, then, *one God*, and only one God, who made us and all things. This truth Almighty God made known, first of all, to Adam and Eve. But soon after the fall of our first parents, when men began to increase and multiply, and at the same time to commit all kinds of wickedness, they forgot what God had taught them about himself, and began to adore a number of false gods, whom they made or fancied for themselves. Thus they had Jupiter, whom they called god of heaven, Neptune, god of the sea, Pluto, god of the infernal regions, and many others. Then they

had goddesses as well as gods, such as Minerva, goddess of wisdom, Venus, of beauty, &c. Some of these gods were adored in one country, and some in another; and even at the present day there are false gods and goddesses like these worshipped in some parts of the world. Yet, if men were not willingly blind, they might easily see that it is absurd to suppose that there are many gods, since to be God is to be Lord and Master of all. Now, there cannot be two lords and masters of all; for if each were master of everything, he would be master of the other also, so that neither of them could be God.

We read in the early history of the Church of a body of heretics, called Manichees, who taught that there are two Gods, one the author of good, and the other the author of evil. For they could not understand how there could be any evil in the world, if it were all the work of an infinitely Good and Perfect God. But they forgot that sin, which is the only real evil there is in the world, is not the work of God, but of man himself, who, when he sins, abuses his free will, which God has given him to enable him to merit heaven.

#### WHO MADE THE DEVILS.

"Who made the angels?" asked a priest one day, when he was catechising a number of children. "God," they all answered in a moment. "And who made the devils?" he continued. They were silent, and looked at each other, for no one liked to say that God made the devils. At length a little boy ventured to speak: "Father," said he, "God made the angels, and the angels made themselves devils."—*Guillois*.

Q. Are there more Persons than one in God?

A. Yes, in God there are three Persons; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

Q. Are these three Persons three Gods?

A. No, these three Persons are not three Gods: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are all one and the same God.

*In God there are three Persons; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost;—and yet there are not three Gods, but One.* This is the second of those four great truths, the knowledge and belief of which is necessary for salvation. The first is, that there is only One



God ; and the second, that in this one God there are three Persons. These three Persons are sometimes called the first, second, and third Persons of the B. Trinity, and sometimes God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

You will notice that, in speaking of these three Divine Persons, we give to each the title of God, which belongs to each by nature. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God ; and yet there are not three Gods, but One God in three distinct Persons. That is to say, the Father is not the Son, for the Son is born or begotten of the Father ; neither is the Holy Ghost the same as the Son or the Father, for he proceeds from them, yet each of the three is God, whole and entire ; or, as the catechism says, *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are all one and the same God.* The nature of God, therefore, is not divided ; but the *Persons* in God are separate and distinct. In like manner, the Perfections of God, that is to say, his Goodness, Wisdom, All-Power, &c., are not divided, but each of the Divine Persons possesses every one of these Perfections whole and entire. The Father is All-Powerful, the Son is All-Powerful, the Holy Ghost is All-Powerful, and it is the same with every other Perfection ; and yet there are not three all-powerful, three all-wise, three all-good, &c., but One All-Powerful, All-Wise, and infinitely Good God in three distinct Persons. Again, though we believe that God the Son is born or begotten of the Father from all eternity, and that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, we do not believe that the Father existed before the Son, or that the Son and the Father existed before the Holy Ghost, but that all the three Divine Persons are equally eternal, alike without beginning and without end. All this, my dear children, is far beyond our poor, weak, limited understandings. It is sufficient for us that God teaches it ; all we have to do is to believe and adore.

#### BAPTISM OF OUR LORD.

When our B. Lord was baptized in the river Jordan by St. John, it pleased Almighty God to show more clearly to the world the

sublime mystery of the B. Trinity, which until that time had been but partly revealed to mankind. St. Matthew relates the history of this event in the following words :—

“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized by him. But John stayed him, saying, *I ought to be baptized by thee, and comest thou to me?* And Jesus answering, said, *Suffer it to be so now, for so it becometh us to fulfil all justice.* Then he suffered him.

“And Jesus, being baptized, forthwith came out of the water. And lo ! the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the spirit of God descending as a dove and coming upon him. And behold a voice from heaven saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*” (Matt. iii.).

See here, my dear children, the three Persons of the B. Trinity, clearly revealed to mankind ; the voice of the Heavenly Father, the Holy Ghost descending in the form of a dove, and God the Son receiving the baptism of his servant St. John.

#### ST. PATRICK AND THE SHAMROCK.

The great St. Patrick, who was sent by the Pope, four hundred years after our B. Lord, to preach the gospel to the Irish, found them a prey to gross superstition and idolatry. In the course of his apostolic journeys, he arrived at the hill of Tara on Easter Eve, the very day on which the false priests of the country, called Druids, were performing on that sacred spot the ceremonies of their false god Baal, in presence of King Leogaire and all his court. According to the ancient law of the country, no fire could be lighted on that day before the sacred fire of Baal had been kindled ; and the Druids had warned the King that, if this were done, the person who lighted the unlawful flame would subdue the land, and change the customs and religion of the people. St. Patrick, however, in performing the solemn office of the Church, blessed the sacred fire, as is usual on Easter Eve, and lighted the Paschal candle. The Druids, observing the strange light, came to the King in the greatest consternation, and begged that he would immediately order it to be extinguished. Thereupon the King, summoning his armed horsemen, rode in anger to the spot, but was met by St. Patrick and his attendants, who came forth in procession, singing the praises of God. The King, touched by God's grace, received him with courtesy, and granted him an audience, which took place on the following morning. At this conference, which was attended by all the chieftains and Druids of the neighbourhood, St. Patrick delivered a full explanation of Catholic doctrine, which was followed by the conversion of many of his hearers, and soon after by that of the whole island.

It was on this occasion that St. Patrick, while instructing the

people in the mystery of the B. Trinity, gathered from the ground a sprig of shamrock, to explain to them more clearly the doctrine of Three Persons in One God. "Behold," he would say to them, "this little plant, which bears on the one stalk three small leaves, the exact copy and resemblance of one another. They are distinct and separate, yet they are one, for they form but one sprig, and rest upon one stalk. So is it, my brethren, that I preach to you a God one in nature and three in person, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, each equally God, but possessing one undivided Godhead."

Since that time, the faithful people of Ireland have loved and cherished this little plant, which their great apostle made use of in the conversion of their forefathers. They have never ceased to glory in it, as the fittest emblem of their country and their faith.—*Life of St. Patrick.*

Q. What is the mystery of the three Persons in one God called?

A. The mystery of the three Persons in one God is called the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

Q. What do you mean by a mystery?

A. By a mystery, I mean a truth which is above my reason, but revealed by God.

This Divine truth, that there are three Persons in one God, is called *the Mystery of the B. Trinity*. For the word *mystery* means a truth made known by God to man, which we are not able to understand by the light of our human reason, and the word *Trinity* means "three in one." Now we are not able to understand how it is possible for there to be three distinct Persons in one undivided Godhead, and yet we know that it is the truth, because God has revealed it; therefore we speak of the B. Trinity as a *mystery*, a great and sublime mystery. There are many other mysteries in religion besides that of the B. Trinity; for Almighty God, to try our obedience, proposes many things to our belief which are far beyond our weak, limited understandings, but which the virtue of faith teaches us to receive at once without doubting, because they are revealed by God himself. For example, it is a mystery to us how God created the world in a moment out of nothing, and how God is present in every portion of space, whole and entire. In regard to these things, we are like little children, who cannot understand many things that grown-up people can; for example, how a watch can be made to tell the time, or what causes the thunder to roll, or the lightning to flash. In the same

manner, grown-up people cannot understand many things which the angels can, for *their* knowledge and understanding are far greater than ours, so that there are many things that are mysteries to us, which are not mysteries to the angels. And those things which are, so to speak, mysteries to the angels because they have not been revealed to them, are not mysteries to God, for he sees and knows all things. You see, then, that *mysteries* come only from the fact of our understandings being limited and imperfect. When we go to heaven, those things which are mysteries to us now will be no longer mysteries, for our souls will then be enlightened, and we shall see them in the light of God's presence. Hence, St. Paul says, "We see now through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face" (1 Cor. xiii. 12).

I will now say another word about the mystery of the B. Trinity. We call the Holy Trinity *Blessed*, because it is of God, who is worthy to be blest for ever, that we speak; and in the same manner we sometimes say the *Adorable* Trinity, because the One God in three Persons is worthy of all our adoration. We also sometimes say the *Undivided* Trinity, because God is not and cannot be divided, though he exists in three distinct Persons. This mystery, my dear children, is the foundation of all religion, and those who do not believe in it, as the Socinians and Unitarians, are not Christians at all. Hence, before we were christened, we were asked by the priest whether we believed in God the Father, in God the Son, and in God the Holy Ghost; and our godfathers and godmothers, speaking for us, answered, that we did believe. We were then baptized in the name of the most Holy Trinity.

As we owe everything, both in soul and body, to the three Persons of the Adorable Trinity, we ought exceedingly to love and reverence this blessed Mystery. Morning and night should we bow down to adore, praise, and thank the One God in three Divine Persons; and all that we do, we should perform in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. We might also, to honour the B. Trinity, sometimes recite, with all the affection of our hearts, this little prayer:—"Blessed be

the Holy and Undivided Trinity now and for evermore. Amen."

Q. Is there any likeness to the Blessed Trinity in your soul?

A. Yes; there is this likeness to the Blessed Trinity in my soul, that, as in one God there are three Persons, so in my one soul there are three powers.

Q. Which are the three powers of your soul?

A. The three powers of my soul are my memory, my understanding, and my will.

Our souls, my dear children, which are made to the image and likeness of God, have also a certain likeness or resemblance to the B. Trinity. This likeness, however, is by no means a perfect one, for there can be no perfect likeness to that which is a mystery. In what, then, does this likeness consist? In this, that *as in one God there are three Persons, so in the one soul of man there are three powers*. The next answer tells you what these powers are; they are the *understanding*, the *memory*, and the *will*. The *understanding* is that power of the soul which enables us to think, to reason, to learn, and to know. The *memory* makes us able to call to mind what we have before learned; and the *will* gives us the power of choosing what we will do, for example, whether we will sit or stand, speak or be silent, &c. Thus, when a boy learns easily and well what is taught him, we say that he has a clever understanding; when he easily forgets what he has learnt, we say that he has a bad memory; and when he is always bent on evil, choosing it rather than good, we say that he has a perverse will. Now these three powers, as you know, belong to the soul, for it is not the body that thinks, remembers, or chooses. In this much, then, is the soul like to the B. Trinity, that, while the soul is one and cannot be divided, it possesses three distinct powers, as God, who is one, exists in three distinct Persons. But it falls short of being like the B. Trinity in this, that each of the Persons in God is God, whole and entire; but each of the powers of the soul is not the soul itself, but only a power or faculty which the soul possesses.

## ST. AUGUSTINE AND THE CHILD.

It is related of St. Augustine that, while busied in writing on the subject of the Most Holy Trinity, he wandered on the sea-shore pondering on the sublime mystery which occupied his thoughts. While thus employed, he beheld before him a child who, having dug a hole in the sand, appeared to be carrying water from the sea to fill it. St. Augustine stopped and asked him what he was about. "I am trying," he replied, "to empty into this hole all the water of the ocean." "What you are attempting is impossible," said St. Augustine. "Not more impossible," replied the child, "than for thee, O Augustine, to understand or explain the mystery on which thou art meditating."

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FIFTH INSTRUCTION.

*Second Article—Jesus Christ—His Divinity and Sacred Humanity—The Mystery of his Incarnation.*

Q. What is the second article of the Creed ?

A. The second article of the creed is, "And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord."

We come now to the second article of the Creed, in which we express our faith in God the Son, the second Person of the B. Trinity. In this article we declare that we believe him to be truly the Son of God, made man to redeem us, and in the five following articles we make an act of faith in the different truths that we are taught concerning him. It is particularly necessary that we should be well instructed in all that relates to God the Son, because he is our Saviour, and it is through his merits only that we can obtain the pardon of our sins and enter into heaven.

But why is it that Jesus Christ is in this article particularly called *our Lord*, that is to say, our Sovereign Master ? Is not God the Father our Lord also ; and is not the Holy Ghost, who is equal in everything to the Father and the Son, Lord and Master of all, as well as they ? Most certainly, my dear children ; but there is a special reason why we give this title particularly to God the Son. It is

because he is our Lord not only as God, but also *as man*. For among all mankind who can be higher or more exalted than he? And who can have a better title to be called our Lord than he, who has set us free from the slavery of the devil, given his own life as the price of our ransom, and come expressly from heaven to establish in our hearts the kingdom of his love? Wherefore the Heavenly Father says to his Divine Son, as man, in one of the Psalms, "I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Ps. ii. 8). And the archangel St. Gabriel, in announcing to the B. Virgin the birth of her Divine Son, said, "The Lord God shall give to him the throne of David his father, and he shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i. 32, 33). Hence, in order to show that we acknowledge him to be our king, and wish to honour and obey him as such, we usually call him our "Blessed Lord," or "Lord Jesus Christ."

Q. Who is Jesus Christ?

A. Jesus Christ is God the Son, made man for us.

Yes; Jesus Christ is the Holy and Adorable Name which the Son of God took, when he became man, in order to redeem us. Therefore, when we speak of the Second Person of the B. Trinity simply *as God*, we generally call him God the Son, but when we speak of him *as God made man for us*, that is, as both God and man, we call him Jesus Christ. The meaning of this Holy Name is explained in the catechism at the end of this article.

You will notice that the greater part of our prayers to God, which come in the prayer book, are addressed to Jesus Christ. There are some to God the Father, some to God the Holy Ghost, and some to the B. Trinity; but most of them are to Jesus Christ. What is the reason of this? It is because it is in him, as our Saviour, that we place all our hopes. His becoming man and dying for us on the cross fills us with a tender confidence, and makes us no longer afraid to approach him. The sinner, when he thinks of his own wickedness and of the Holiness and

Majesty of God, might tremble and be afraid to draw near to a God whom he has so much offended ; but when he looks at Jesus Christ, who, though God, became man and died for sinners, he is no longer afraid, but runs to him with confidence and begs him to wash out his sins in his Precious Blood. For the same reason, when we pray to God the Father, we always end our prayers with these words, *through Jesus Christ our Lord*, because our prayers can only please the Heavenly Father, when offered up through the merits of his Divine Son.

Q. Is Jesus Christ truly God ?

A. Yes ; Jesus Christ is truly God.

Q. Why is Jesus Christ truly God ?

A. Jesus Christ is truly God because he has one and the same nature with God the Father.

Jesus Christ *is truly God*, my dear children, and why ? *Because he has one and the same nature with God the Father*, that is to say, because he has the nature of God ; just as the angels are angels because they have the nature of angels, and man is man because he has a body and soul, which is the nature of man. But what do we mean when we say that Jesus Christ has *the nature of God* ? What does the nature of God consist in ? You have already been told this in the explanation of the first article of the Creed, where you learnt that “ God is the Supreme Spirit, who alone exists of himself, and is infinite in all perfections.” You see from this, that the nature of God is to be the highest or greatest of all spirits, to exist of his own Power, and to possess every perfection in an infinite or boundless degree. This, then, is the nature which Jesus Christ possesses as the only begotten Son of the Eternal Father.

It follows from what I have said, that Jesus Christ is infinitely worthy of our homage and adoration. While, therefore, we honour and love him as our Lord and our Saviour, we also adore him as our God. In all our wants, trials, and dangers, we look up to him with an entire confidence, knowing that he, who became man and died to save us, is a God of Infinite Wisdom, Power, and



Goodness, and therefore both able and willing to assist, console, and defend us.

#### DEATH OF ARIUS.

The frightful death of the heretic Arius is a terrible example of the just anger of God against the teachers of false doctrine, and especially against those who dare to blaspheme the name of his Divine Son. This wicked man, who lived about three hundred years after the time of our Lord, had blasphemously asserted that Jesus Christ, though the Son of God, is of a different substance, and inferior to his Heavenly Father. This false doctrine was solemnly condemned by the great Council of Nicæa, composed of Bishops from all parts of the world, with the legates or representatives of the Pope at their head. Arius, however, still found many followers, and succeeded in obtaining the support of the Roman Emperor Constantine, who ordered the Bishop of Constantinople to receive Arius back to the communion of the Church. The holy Bishop had recourse to God by prayer, to avert so great a scandal, and the Almighty, jealous of the honour of his Divine Son, did not fail to hear him. On the day appointed for the forcible reception of Arius into the church, a procession of his followers was formed in the streets of Constantinople. With songs of triumph and with great parade, they led forth Arius to the church, boasting loudly of the victory which they had obtained over the Catholic Bishops. Their triumph, however, was but of short duration, for as they were passing through the great square of the city, the anger of God overtook the unhappy man. Suddenly he was seized with frightful spasms, which compelled him to take refuge in a secret room until he should be able to resume his journey. Hour after hour passed away, and he did not make his appearance. The people grew impatient, and his followers were alarmed at the delay. At length they ventured to enter the closet to which he had retired. There he lay stretched on the ground, a frightful spectacle ; his face pale and livid, his body stiff in death, and the whole floor strewn with his blood and intestines. His body had burst asunder, like that of the traitor Judas.—*Theodoret*.

Q. Was Jesus Christ always God ?

A. Yes, Jesus Christ was always God ; born of the Father from all eternity.

As Jesus Christ is truly God, possessing the nature and perfections of God, it follows as a matter of course, that *he was always God*, since God has no beginning, and therefore as he is God now, there never could have been a time when he was not God. How is it then, my dear children, that he is called the *Son* of God ? Is not the

son younger than the father, and does not the father always exist before the son? On earth it is so : but we must not compare earthly things with heavenly ones. Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God, *born of the Father*, but by a wonderful and mysterious birth, which began *from all eternity*, and is continually going on, so that there never was a time when God the Son did not exist along with God the Father. This mysterious birth or generation, as it is called, of God the Son, is therefore a very different thing from human birth. It is a mystery, taught us by God himself, and which, accordingly, we believe and adore, though human reason cannot fathom it. By this eternal birth God the Son possesses all the perfections of his Heavenly Father, since he possesses the same Divine nature, being one and the same God with him.

Q. Which Person of the Blessed Trinity is Jesus Christ?

A. Jesus Christ is the second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

This answer of the catechism follows as a matter of course from those which have gone before. Jesus Christ is God the Son, made man for us, and therefore *he is the Second*, and not the first or third *Person of the B. Trinity*. But though it was the second Person alone who took a human body to redeem us, do not think that what God the Son did, he did separately or apart from the Father and the Holy Ghost. No, all the three Persons concurred in the work of redeeming man, as they did also in that of creating him ; for these three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are One, and do not act separately or apart from one another. Thus God the Father gave his only Son for our Redemption, and it was, as you will see in the next article, by the co-operation of the Holy Ghost that this great and wonderful mystery was accomplished.

Q. Is Jesus Christ truly man?

A. Yes ; Jesus Christ is truly man.

Q. Why is Jesus Christ truly man?

A. Jesus Christ is truly man because he has the nature of man, having a body and soul like ours.

You have seen already that Jesus Christ is truly God, because he has the nature of God. But he is also *truly man*. And why? Your catechism tells you, *because he has the nature of man*, and it goes on to explain what that nature consists of, when it says, *having a body and soul like ours*. This, then, is the nature of man, this is what makes man what he is—to have a human body and a soul made to the image of God. In the same manner it is the nature of the angels to be spirits without bodies, and of the lower animals to have a body, endowed with life indeed, but without a human and immortal soul. Now the Son of God, in coming to save man, did not take the form and nature of an angel, much less that of any of the lower orders of his creatures, but he took the nature of *man*, that is to say, a body descended from Adam, and a soul created to the image of God. In a word, he became one of us, in all excepting sin. By thus becoming man, he has bestowed the highest honour upon our human nature, making us thereby his brethren, and raising us to the exalted dignity of sons of God.

Q. Was Jesus Christ always man?

A. No. Jesus Christ was not always man: he has been man only from the time of his Incarnation.

Jesus Christ has been always God, for he was born of the Father from all eternity, but he has not been always man, but *only from the time of his Incarnation*, when he became man in order to save us. There has been a time, therefore, when Jesus Christ was not man, but there has never been a time when he was not God. Six thousand years ago, when the world was made, he was God, as he had ever been, but he was not yet man. Adam sinned, lost the favour of God, was driven out of paradise, and condemned to hell; all this time Jesus Christ was God only, surrounded by thousands of adoring angels, and enjoying the infinite glory and happiness of heaven. Then it was, that, touched with the misery of man, and pitying his sad lot, he offered himself to his Heavenly Father to become man, and bear man's punishment by dying for him on the cross, in order that his Father might pardon

sinful man, and open to him again the gate of heaven. God the Father accepted the generous sacrifice. He consented that his Son should die and man be saved, but not as yet ; the world must first be prepared for this great event. He therefore only promised to Adam that the day should come, when the woman should crush the serpent's head, that is to say, that his Divine Son should one day be born of a woman, and destroy the power of the devil, who in the form of a serpent had tempted Eve.

Adam and Eve lived on, believing and hoping in *the promise of God*, but the Son of God did not come in their lifetime. Two thousand years passed away, the world became steeped in sin through the wickedness of man, and was swept by God with the terrible waters of the deluge ; but Jesus Christ did not yet come. The world must first be made to feel the want of a Saviour, and be prepared to know and receive him when he came. Then Almighty God sent into the world good and holy men, who might show forth in their own lives all that was to happen to his Divine Son, and thus prepare mankind to receive him. Thus Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Melchisedech, and others, whom we call the Patriarchs, and of whom you will read in the History of the Bible, were so many *types* or figures of Jesus Christ, who fulfilled in his Life, Passion, and Death, what happened to *them* thousands of years before.

After this, Almighty God, seeing mankind again deeply plunged in sin and following for the most part the worship of false gods and idols, chose out one people or nation to preserve the knowledge of the true God, and the promise of a Saviour, which he had made first to Adam and Eve, and afterwards to the holy Patriarchs. This people was called the Jewish people, and was descended from Abraham. It was divided into twelve tribes, who were descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob, Abraham's grandson. This people at first endured great sufferings from the tyranny of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, but God brought them out of Egypt, under the command of Moses, to whom he gave power to work many wonderful miracles to effect their deliverance. After this he led them into the desert,

and opened for them a passage through the waters of the Red Sea, into the beautiful land which he gave them to dwell in. But before he gave them possession of this land, he first taught them his Divine Law in the desert, in which they were condemned to wander for forty years on account of their sins. This law of God, given to Moses on Mount Sinai, and through him to the Jews or Israelites, contains the ten commandments, and the manner in which the Jews had to serve and worship God. It is called *the Written Law*, because it was written down by the Divine command. Until then, the messages of God to man had never been written, but had been handed down by word of mouth from father to son. This is what we call *Tradition*, or *the Unwritten Law*, and it was by this that man was taught the will of God until the time of Moses. About this time Almighty God showed the Jews many things, in *signs and figures*, about his Divine Son, all of which were carefully written down by God's command in that sacred book, which is called the Bible, and which is the word of God himself.

Hundreds of years now passed away, and the Son of God was not yet born on earth. The Jews, the favoured people of God, in their new country, often forgot the God who had given it them, and fell away into the worship of false gods, like the nations around them. They were then brought back to their duty, sometimes by severe punishments, which God sent them, and at other times by the preaching of certain holy men, who came as messengers from God to warn them of his anger. These holy men, who were called *Prophets*, were full of the Spirit of God, and were inspired by him to make known to the Jews many more particulars about his Divine Son, that no one might possibly mistake him, when he should appear. Thus David, Isaiah, Jeremias, Daniel, and the other prophets, pointed out the place and time of his Birth, the family and the Virgin Mother, of whom he should be born, and the different events of his Life, Passion, and Death. At length no more prophets appeared; the time was now drawing near for the Birth of the Son of God.

Meanwhile, the Jewish people were led captives into a

strange land, both in punishment of their repeated disobedience, and that the knowledge of God's promises of a Saviour might be more widely spread; but, when they were humbled and repentant, God brought them back from thence, that the prophecies might be fulfilled regarding the Birth and Death of his Divine Son. All the great events which took place in the world about this time were also made to serve to the accomplishment of this sublime mystery,—the coming of the Son of God to save mankind. *Empire succeeded empire*, each doing its appointed task, until at last the whole world was united in one vast empire, that of Rome, ready for the coming of the Saviour and the preaching of the gospel. Then, and not till then, four thousand years after the promise made to Adam, was the great mystery accomplished—the Son of God took our human nature, and was born into the world to suffer and die for man.

#### VISION OF NABUCHODONOSOR.

Many hundred years before the coming of our Lord, Almighty God showed to Nabuchodonosor, King of Babylon, in a dream, how his own empire, and the empires which succeeded it, should go before and prepare the way for the establishment of that spiritual kingdom which his Divine Son was coming to found upon earth. Nabuchodonosor woke in the morning much terrified, and yet he could not recall to mind the dream which had filled him with alarm. He accordingly summoned all the wise men of his kingdom, and bade them, under pain of death, declare to him both the dream which he had forgotten, and the interpretation or meaning of it. As they were unable to do so, he ordered them to be led to execution.

Hereupon, the prophet Daniel, inspired by God, went to the King, and, begging him to stay the execution, declared himself ready to relate to him both the dream itself and its mysterious meaning.

"Thou, O King," said he, "didst begin to think, in thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter, and he that revealeth mysteries showed thee what shall come to pass.

"Thou sawest, and behold! there was, as it were, a great statue. The head of this statue was of fine gold, but the breast and the arms of silver, and the belly and the thighs of brass, and the legs of iron, the feet, part of iron and part of clay. Thus thou sawest, till a stone was cut out of a mountain without hands, and it struck the statue upon the feet thereof, and broke them in pieces. Then was

the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together, and they were carried away by the wind, and there was no place found for them ; but the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. This is the dream : we will also tell the interpretation thereof.

“Thou art a king of kings, and the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, and strength, and power, and glory. Thou, therefore, art the head of gold. And after thee shall rise up another kingdom, inferior to thee, of silver, and another third kingdom of brass. And the fourth kingdom shall be as iron. As iron breaketh into pieces and subdueth all things, so shall that break and destroy all these. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken. In the days of those kingdoms the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed ; and it shall break in pieces, and shall consume all these kingdoms, and itself shall stand for ever. As thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and broke in pieces the clay, and the iron, and the brass, and the silver, and the gold ” (Daniel ii.).

These four kingdoms, my dear children, are the four great empires which preceded the coming of Christ, and each of which performed the part marked out for it by Providence, in preparing the way before him. The great Babylonian Empire chastised the Jews for their idolatry, by leading them into the seventy years' captivity ; the Persian Empire brought them back, humbled and penitent, into the land where the Son of God was to be born. The Grecian Empire spread the Holy Scriptures throughout the world, that all mankind might be ready to receive and know where to look for their Redeemer. Finally the Roman Empire, by uniting the world into one vast nation, made the preaching of the gospel easy, at the same time that it fulfilled the prophecies which pointed out the place and time of our Saviour's Birth, and the circumstances of his Passion and Death. But all this was to prepare the way for the establishment of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, shown to the king of Babylon under the figure of a stone, cut from a mountain but not by human hands, and filling the whole earth. Of this kingdom there shall be no end, for the Church of Christ, built on a rock, shall stand unshaken till the end of time, and shall continue to exist for all eternity in heaven.

Q. What do you mean by the Incarnation?

A. By the Incarnation I mean that God the Son took to himself the nature of man: "the Word was made flesh" (John i. 14).

In the last answer of the catechism, my dear children, you learnt that our B. Lord, though he has been always God, has not been always man, but only from the time of his Incarnation, that is, of his becoming man to redeem us. The mystery of our Lord's Incarnation is one of the most important doctrines of our holy religion. It is the third of those four great truths about which I have already spoken to you, and which are sometimes called the *necessary truths*, because it is probable that no one can be saved unless he both knows and believes them. The first of these truths is *the Existence of One God*, the second, *the mystery of the B. Trinity*, and the third is that great mystery of Love, of which we are now going to speak, namely, *the Incarnation of the Son of God*.

The appointed time had at length arrived when the promise of a Redeemer, made to our first parents after their fall and repeated at different times to the Holy Patriarchs and Prophets, was to be fulfilled; and, all things having been prepared for this great event, the archangel St. Gabriel was sent from heaven to a lowly maiden named Mary, of the tribe of Juda and family of David, to announce to her that she was chosen among all women to be the Mother of God made man. Mary having with deep humility accepted the sublime office, the Son of God, the Divine Word, by a wonderful miracle, *took flesh*, that is to say, a human body, in her virginal womb, while his Heavenly Father, at the same moment, created an immortal soul, adorned with every grace, which our B. Lord took and made his own. Thus was God the Son made man, taking to himself the nature of man, which is what we mean by the mystery of the Incarnation. It is from this great event, the greatest that has ever happened, that we count or reckon time; so that when we speak of this being the year 1881, we mean that it is 1881 years since the Son of God became man to redeem us.

We should never forget, my dear children, often to thank our B. Lord for his Infinite Goodness in becoming



man to save us. It is for this purpose that we recite the Angelus morning, noon, and night ; for the Angelus is, as it were, a little history of our Lord's Incarnation. In Catholic countries the church bell is always rung at the time of the Angelus, and all good Catholics, wherever they may be, in their houses, the streets, or the market-places, immediately uncover their heads and say it. Often they go and kneel down before some wayside cross or image of our B. Lady, in order to recite it more devoutly. Let *us* also be faithful to this pious practice, which is so Catholic, and to which many indulgences are attached. Morning, noon, and night, let us join with the Church of God throughout the world in thanking our dear Lord by this devotion for his Infinite Goodness in becoming man to save us, and in honouring that B. Mother from whom he took our human nature.

#### THE DEVIL AND THE YOUNG MAN.

In assisting at the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we are taught to bend our knee twice in honour of our Lord's Incarnation ; first during the Creed, at the words, "*Et Homo factus est, and he was made man ;*" and, secondly, at the "*Verbum caro factum est, the Word was made flesh,*" which comes in the last gospel just before the end of Mass. It is related by a certain ancient writer, that it happened on one occasion that a young man, who was present at Mass, neglected to genuflect at the words, "*and he was made man,*" in the Creed, whereupon the devil appeared to him in a terrible form, armed with a club, and thus addressed him, "*Ungrateful wretch, dost thou not thank the God who was made man for thee ? If he had done for us what he has done for thee, we should be ever prostrate before him, thanking and adoring him. And thou dost not even make a sign of thankfulness.*" So saying, he struck him rudely with his club and left him, like Heliodorus of old, half dead with pain and fear.—*St. Liguori on the Commandments.*

**Q.** How many natures are there in Jesus Christ ?

**A.** There are two natures in Jesus Christ, the nature of God and the nature of man.

You see, my dear children, from what has been said, that Jesus Christ possesses two distinct natures, the nature of God and the nature of man ; or, in other words, the Divine and human natures. The one he possesses as the Son of God, the other as the Son of Mary. But

both he possesses whole and entire. By his Divine nature he has every perfection ; he is Eternal, Almighty, infinitely Powerful, infinitely Wise, &c. : by his human nature he possesses a human body, and a soul endowed with reason and free-will, both most perfect indeed, but like the body and soul of man. These two natures are intimately united in Jesus Christ, but they are not mixed or confounded. In his human nature, when on earth, he toiled for the salvation of man, prayed, suffered, and died. By the infinite Power of his Divine nature he healed the sick, raised the dead to life, rose from the grave, and ascended into heaven. These two natures are expressed in the one word, "Man-God," which is often used in speaking of our B. Lord, as when we say, "it required the sufferings of a Man-God to redeem us," that is of one who possessed the double nature of man and God.

Q. Are there also two Persons in Jesus Christ ?

A. No ; in Jesus Christ there is only one Person, which is the Person of God the Son.

While we believe that there are two natures in Jesus Christ, the nature of God and the nature of man, we must always remember that *there is only one Person*. That Person is *the Person of God the Son*. He *was* God, and he became man without ceasing to be God, and thus united in his one Person the Divine and human natures. Attend carefully to the explanation which I am about to give you of this most important truth. Though we cannot fully explain that which is a mystery, yet it will help you to understand better the meaning of what the catechism says, namely, that there are *two* natures in Jesus Christ, but only *one* Person.

Look at yourselves. You are made up of soul and of body ; is it not so ? But though you have, each of you, a soul and a body, yet you are only one person. Your body is not a person, neither is your soul. *You* are the person, *you* who possess this body and this soul. You make use at one time of the body, and at another time of the soul, just according to your need. You think with your understanding, which is a power of the soul ; you

see with your eyes, which are one of the senses of the body. You love God with your will, which belongs to the soul; you sing his praises with your lips and tongue, which are members of the body. But *you* are the person who thinks, sees, praises, and loves God,—*you*, John, Mary, or Thomas, to whom God has given a human nature, consisting of soul and of body; *you* are the person who does all, whichever part of your human nature you make use of.

Behold, my dear children, a faint image of what takes place in Jesus Christ, and of what we mean when we say that there are two natures in Jesus Christ, but only one Person. He, the Son of God, is the Person who did everything that we read of in the history of his life upon earth, but sometimes he employed his Divine and sometimes his human nature to accomplish his designs. He suffered hunger, thirst, and cold *as man*, but he fed the famishing multitudes in the wilderness by his Almighty Power *as God*; he prayed to his Father as man, but, *as God*, he commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm; he died on the cross *in his human nature*, but *by his own Divine and Almighty Power* he raised his B. Body to life, and ascended to the right hand of his Heavenly Father. But whether he fasted or fed the hungry, prayed or worked miracles, suffered or triumphed, it was the one Person of Jesus Christ who accomplished all, though at one time he acted by his *human* and at another by his *Divine* nature. The knowledge of this truth will help you to understand the great mystery of our Redemption, which we come to speak of in the next lesson of the catechism.

#### THE EUTYCHIAN CONFOUNDED.

A certain follower of the sect of the Eutychians, who deny that there are two natures in Jesus Christ, was one day trying to convince a Catholic boy that our B. Lord, after his Incarnation, had only one nature, as he has only one Person. To prove this more clearly, he placed two pieces of iron in the fire, and, when they were melted, joined them together, so as to make but one. "Behold," said he, "the manner in which God and man join to make the one nature of Jesus Christ." "But, master," said the boy, "what if

one of the pieces be of gold instead of iron? Will they not then make a single piece consisting of two metals?" So is it that the Son of God, in taking a body and soul like ours, has united the two natures of God and man in a single Person. — *Anecdotes Chrétiennes.*

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## SIXTH INSTRUCTION.

*Second Article concluded—Jesus Christ—His Office of Redeemer—His Holy Name—Third Article—His Conception and Birth.*

You have already learnt, my dear children, that the ever Blessed Son of God, the Second Person of the Adorable Trinity, took a body and soul like ours, in the great mystery of his Incarnation, and thus united in his One Person the two natures of God and Man. Before I relate to you the history of this great event, I must first ask you the *reason* of it. What was it that induced the Great God of Heaven, who possessed in himself infinite happiness and glory, to humble himself so as to take the form and nature of one of his own creatures, to live a life of poverty and suffering upon earth, and to die a cruel and disgraceful death on the cross, as if he had been the vilest criminal? In other words—

**Q.** Why was God the Son made man?

**A.** God the Son was made man to redeem us from sin and hell, and to teach us the way to heaven.

Yes, it was *to redeem us from sin and hell*, that is to say, to atone for our sins and save us from the punishment of hell which we had deserved by them, and also to guide us by his word and example to our true home in heaven, that the Son of God took our human nature. When our first parents, Adam and Eve, were created by God, they were created free from sin; their souls were perfectly pure and spotless, and enjoyed the particular favour and friendship of God. Their bodies also were endowed with a health and vigour which would never have failed them had they remained faithful and obedient to their Creator.

Almighty God having created them, placed them in the beautiful garden of Paradise, which he destined to be their happy abode until the appointed time came, when he purposed to transfer them without dying from earth to heaven. Before putting them, however, in possession of this eternal reward, the Justice of God required that he should first try them, in order to test their obedience and fidelity to him. He accordingly laid upon them one command, which was, that they should not eat of the fruit of one of the trees which grew in the garden of Paradise, and which was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. At the same time he threatened them with the severest punishments in case of their disobedience. "In what day soever thou shalt eat of it," said he, "thou shalt die the death" (Gen. ii. 17). Tempted by the beautiful appearance of the fruit and deceived by the artifices of the devil, Eve eat of the fruit and gave it to Adam, who eat likewise, both thereby committing a grievous act of disobedience to God. Thus did sin first enter into the world, and the example of our first parents has unhappily been too closely followed by their descendants.

No sooner was the sin committed than the punishment followed. Almighty God, calling Adam and Eve before him, severely rebuked them, and declared that, in punishment of their sin, they had incurred the sentence with which he had threatened them, namely, *death*; that is to say, a double death—the death of the body and the eternal death of the soul. Now this punishment, my dear children, has come down from them to us; we are all born in the sin of our first parents, and we share also in the consequences of their guilt. Hence it is that our bodies, after a few short years, return to the dust out of which God made them; and that our souls are, at their first coming into the world, deprived of the favour of God, and sentenced to be for ever excluded from this Divine presence, which to the soul is a state of continual death. What, then, was to become of unhappy man, now that an Unchangeable God had pronounced this most just decree? Who could offer to God an atonement sufficient to satisfy his Justice and induce him to spare the guilty? No one,

it would seem ; to all appearance no one. For sin is an offence and outrage against an Infinite God, and requires, therefore, a satisfaction of infinite value, which no *man*, nor all men together, could make. The very Angels could not make a satisfaction of infinite value, for, though far above man, they are only creatures, and infinitely below God, so that *they* could not satisfy for sin or save mankind. And yet God, who always tempers Justice with Mercy, *did* promise Adam and Eve, when he passed sentence upon them, that he would send them a Saviour. *The woman*, he said, *shall crush the serpent's head* (Gen. iii. 15), that is to say, one should be born of the woman who should destroy the power of the devil. But who was this to be? No other than his own Divine Son, who, in his Infinite Goodness and Mercy, offered to become the victim to atone for the sins of man, and to bear in his own person the punishment that man had deserved. But behold the wonderful Mystery of the Infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and Power of God ! The Son of God wished to bear the punishment of sin ; but, as God, he could not suffer. Besides, it was *man* that had sinned, and man that ought to atone. Therefore, without ceasing to be God, he became man, and united in his one Person the Divine and human natures. His human nature enabled him to suffer, and his Divine nature gave an infinite value to his sufferings. For it was, as we have seen, the Person of the Son of God who fasted, prayed, suffered, and died. Hence each action of Jesus Christ had so great a value in the sight of God, that a single prayer, a single drop of his Precious Blood, would have been sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world. But our dear Lord would suffer all he did suffer, to show us the enormity of our sins and the greatness of his Love. See, then, my dear children, what claims he has to our eternal love and gratitude.

You will understand, from what I have said, that the word *to redeem*, as applied to Jesus Christ, means much the same as “to save ;” wherefore we sometimes call him our B. Redeemer, and sometimes our B. Saviour. Strictly speaking, “to redeem” means *to buy back* ; thus, in speaking of slaves or prisoners of war, we say, “it is a

great charity to send money to redeem them," that is, to buy back their liberty. Now *we* were slaves and prisoners of the devil by sin ; and St. Peter says that Jesus Christ has redeemed us, not with gold or silver, or corruptible things, but with his own most Precious Blood (1 Pet. i. 18), because he paid this price for the purchase of our liberty.

Q. What does the holy name *Jesus* mean ?

A. The holy name *Jesus* means Saviour (Matt. i. 21).

The name Jesus, my dear children, is of all others the most holy and sacred, because it is the name which was borne by the Son of God when he lived upon earth. This holy name was given to our Lord not by man, but by God himself ; for when the Angel appeared to St. Joseph to tell him not to fear to take the B. Virgin for his spouse, since that which was conceived in her was of the Holy Ghost, he added, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus ; for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21). In the Hebrew language the name of Jesus has the meaning of *Saviour* ; whence you see how particularly well suited it was to him who was to be the Saviour of the world. Our B. Lord, however, was not the first who had borne this name, though he alone fully fulfilled the meaning of it. Others among the Jews, as we find from Holy Scripture, had also been called Jesus, particularly Josue, the great captain who succeeded Moses and led the Israelites, amid many dangers, out of the desert into the promised land. Josue was in this a figure of our Lord, since he was in some manner the saviour of his people ; whence he was fitly called Josue, or Jesus, for these two names have one and the same meaning. But our B. Lord alone is our true Jesus, since he has died to save us all from sin and hell, and will lead us, if we walk in the way of his commandments, into the true land of promise, the kingdom of heaven.

As the name of Jesus is so sacred and holy, we should always pronounce it with profound respect, and bow our heads in reverence whenever we either utter or hear it. The Apostle St. Paul says that "in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow of those that are in heaven, on earth,

and under the earth" (Phil. ii. 10). The very devils, you see, are forced to show an outward respect when they listen to this Adorable Name. But if *they* bow through fear, we, like the Angels in heaven, will do it through love; for is it not the name of our King and our Saviour, of our best Friend and our loving and tender Father? Let the name of Jesus be often on your lips, uttered in some little fervent prayer to our dear Lord; but let it be always in your heart, tenderly loved and cherished, and moving you to many good works; for example, to many acts of patience, charity, and meekness. In your temptations, call on Jesus; his name will fill the devils with dismay and put them to flight. In all your wants, invoke Jesus; for what can he deny you, who has given himself to save you? In moments of weakness and of danger, utter this sweet name, and it will inspire you with fresh strength and courage; in sickness and suffering it will bring you patience and resignation; on the bed of death it will soothe your anguish and obtain for you a sure victory over the last efforts of the devil.

#### CURE OF THE LAME MAN.

"Now Peter and John went up into the temple at the ninth hour of prayer. And a certain man, who was lame from his mother's womb, was carried, whom they laid every day at the gate of the temple, which is called Beautiful, that he might ask alms of them that went into the temple.

"He, when he had seen Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms. But Peter with John fastening his eyes upon him, said, *Look upon us*. But he looked earnestly upon them, hoping that he should receive something of them. But Peter said, *Silver and gold I have none: but what I have I give thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk*. And taking him by the right hand, he lifted him up, and forthwith his feet and soles received strength. And he leaping up, stood, and walked, and went with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

"And all the people saw him walking and praising God. And they knew him, that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened to him.

"And as Peter and John were speaking to the people, the priests and the officer of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them. And they laid hands upon them, and put them in hold till the next



day. And it came to pass on the morrow, that, setting them in the midst, they asked, *By what power or by what name have you done this?* Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said to them, *Ye princes of the people and ancients, hear. If we this day are examined concerning the good deed done to this infirm man, by what means he hath been made whole, be it known to you all, that by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead, even by him this man standeth before you whole. For there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved*" (Acts iii.).

#### ST. TERESA AND THE DIVINE CHILD.

St. Teresa was so inflamed with love at the thought of our B. Lord's goodness in becoming man and dying for her, that she looked upon this life as a continued martyrdom, through her ardent desire of being united to her Divine Spouse. It was her custom to sign all her letters, *Teresa of Jesus*, to show that she lived for Jesus alone, and loved him alone. One day, when she was walking through the cloisters of her convent at Avila, she met a beautiful child, who stopped when he saw her, and looked up to her face with an engaging smile. The holy nun, wondering how he had been able to enter the convent, asked him to tell her his name. "I will, if you will tell me your own," said the child. "Mine?" said St. Teresa, smiling; "I am called *Teresa of Jesus*." "And if you would know mine," said the child, "I am called *Jesus of Teresa*." At the same moment he disappeared, leaving St. Teresa's heart overflowing with wonder and gratitude at the Infinite Goodness of our Lord, who returns so tenderly the love of his unworthy creatures.—*Anima Divota*.

Q. What does the name *Christ* mean?

A. The name *Christ* means Anointed.

The word *Christ* signifies *Anointed*, and was applied by the Jews at the time of our Lord to the Saviour or Redeemer whom they expected. Thus we find that, when St. John the Baptist had aroused public attention by the fame of his preaching, the Pharisees sent to ask him if he was *the Christ* (John i. 19, &c.). And they put the same question to our Blessed Lord. "How long," said they, "dost thou hold our souls in suspense? If thou be *the Christ*, tell us plainly" (John x. 24). But you will ask why the name of *Christ* or *Anointed* was especially reserved for the expected Saviour.

It was, my dear children, on account of his threefold character as Priest, Prophet, and King. For each of these was in the old law solemnly anointed with oil, to signify the

graces which he required for the discharge of his important office. And even at the present time the anointing with oil forms part of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, by which priests are consecrated, and of the religious ceremony which accompanies the coronation of a king. Now, our B. Lord fulfilled all these three characters, wherefore he is justly styled, above all others, the *Christ* or *Anointed*. He is, as you know, our great High Priest, who offered on the cross, and still offers in the Mass, the sacrifice of his own Body for the salvation of the world. He is also the great Prophet who fulfilled the prophecies of all who had gone before, and predicted many things, some of which have already come to pass, and some of which remain to be accomplished at the end of the world. Finally, he is a King, for he came to establish in our hearts the kingdom of his grace, and to bring us all hereafter to the eternal kingdom of heaven. Do not imagine, however, that our B. Lord was anointed with oil, in the manner that man is anointed, to fulfil these sublime offices. No; his anointing was the presence of his Godhead or Divinity, closely united with his human nature. By this his Sacred Body and Soul were consecrated and set apart for the important office of redeeming man.

Q. Where is Jesus Christ?

A. Jesus Christ, as God, is everywhere. As God and Man, he is in heaven, and in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

Jesus Christ being the Son of God, equal to his Father in all things, possesses all the Perfections of the Divine Nature, and is consequently present everywhere *as God*, filling every atom of space, and supporting and upholding all things by his Infinite Wisdom and Power. "In him," says the Apostle, "we live and move and be" (Acts xvii. 28). But where is he present as *God made Man*? Where are his Human Body and his Human Soul? Most certainly *in heaven*, for the Apostles' Creed tells us, that after he was crucified, and dead and buried, he rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and there sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. Jesus Christ is, therefore, ever present as Man in heaven, seated

in the midst of power and majesty ; but is he present anywhere else, I mean with his human body and his human soul? Yes, my dear children, he is ever present in the *Blessed Sacrament of the Altar*, hidden from the eyes of men under the humble form of the Sacred Host. And where is the Blessed Sacrament? It is, as you know, preserved in the Holy Tabernacle, which stands upon the altar of this Church, and a light is ever kept burning before it to show the presence of the Lord of Heaven. And this it is which makes a Catholic church or chapel, however poor and humble, so holy and sacred, since it is the dwelling-place of Jesus Christ. Hence you are taught, whenever you enter the church, always to kneel and adore our B. Lord, and to behave with the greatest reverence while you remain, since you are in the immediate presence of the Son of God.

Before we go on to the next article, I am going to tell you a little history, which I want to know whether any of you have ever heard or read.

#### THE GENEROUS PRINCE.

A certain great monarch had a favourite nobleman, whom he had raised from an obscure condition, loaded with riches and honours, and placed in one of the highest offices of his kingdom. Unfortunately this favourite allowed the poison of pride to enter his heart. Puffed up with his good fortune, and not content to be second in the kingdom, he wished to be first. He accordingly planned a vast conspiracy, by which he might be able to put aside the king and take possession of the throne. Fortunately, the plot was discovered at the moment fixed for its execution. The ungrateful nobleman was stripped of his riches and dignities, and banished with all his family to a remote province, where he was reduced to the same low and destitute state from which the king had first raised him.

Now it happened that the king had a son, a noble youth, full of tender compassion and generosity. Hearing of the disgrace of the former favourite, he hastened to his father, threw himself at his feet, and with many tears implored him to pardon the exile and his family. The king graciously consented, and immediately the young prince, disguising himself, set off, alone and on foot, to bear to the wretched family the happy and unexpected tidings. After enduring the severest hardships and sufferings on the journey, the prince at length arrived at the distant province to which they had been banished. He found the exile and his family plunged in the deepest misery, and suffering the extremity of want. The generous prince

hastened to console them. "Rejoice," said he; "your sufferings are now at an end. I am the son of the king who sent you into banishment, and I have implored and obtained your pardon from my father. Henceforward consider me as your friend, your brother. You shall return to court, you shall dwell in my palace, you shall sit at my own table; my riches, my honours, the kingdom which is my inheritance, all shall be yours."

At these words the unhappy exile and his family appeared in a moment restored to a new life. They raised their eyes to heaven, and blessed God for his wonderful goodness. Then, with bursting hearts and tears of gratitude, they cast themselves at the prince's feet, and strove to thank him for a generosity and self-devotion which the world had never yet beheld. But all they could utter were these simple words:—"Prince, what are we, and what art thou!"—*Catéch. de Persév.*

My dear children, have you ever heard before this touching history? Yes; for you yourselves belong to the family of the poor exile, who was your father, Adam. By his unhappy pride and desire to become like to God, he rebelled against the Divine Majesty, was driven out of Paradise, and condemned, with all his descendants, to wander an exile on earth, far from his true country, the kingdom of heaven. And who was the young prince? You know it was our dear Lord, the only Son of God, who, by his tears and prayers,—nay, even by his sufferings and cruel death, has satisfied for our sins and obtained our pardon. He has laid aside, as it were, his glory and dignity, put on the disguise of our human flesh, and descended into the place of our banishment to bring us the happy tidings of our deliverance. And now he calls us his friends and his brothers, and promises to share with us the riches, the honours, the delights, of his heavenly kingdom. O Great Prince of Heaven, Eternal Son of God, what are we, and what art thou!

Q. What is the third article of the Creed?

A. The third article of the Creed is "Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

We have seen, my dear children, from the explanation of the second article of the Creed, who our B. Lord is, and how he became man in order to redeem us. We come now to the third article, in which we express our belief in his Conception and Birth; "Who was *conceived* by the Holy

Ghost, *born of the Virgin Mary.*" The Incarnation of the Son of God, that is, his becoming man to save us, is indeed a wonderful Mystery of Divine Love; but when we consider the manner in which this great event took place, we shall see still greater reason to admire the Infinite Goodness of our Lord, especially in his choosing, out of pure love to us, to be born in a stable, and to suffer, at his very entrance into the world, all the ills of poverty and want. As the meaning of this article is fully explained in the answer to the next question, I will now ask it you.

Q. What does this third article mean?

A. The third article means that God the Son took a Body and Soul like ours, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Q. Had Jesus Christ any Father on earth?

A. No; Jesus Christ had no Father on earth: St. Joseph was only his Guardian, or Foster-Father.

Attend, my dear children, to the words which you have just repeated, and you will learn from them three important truths.

*First.*—That God the Son took a Body and Soul like ours; or, in other words, that he *was made man*.

*Secondly.*—That he was born of the *B. Virgin Mary*.

*Thirdly.*—That this happened by a miracle, and *by the power of the Holy Ghost, without his having any Father on earth*.

*God the Son took a Body and Soul like ours.* This great mystery, by which the Creator took the form of a creature, and the Lord of all the form of a slave, was accomplished on the 25th of March, which we commonly call the Feast of the Annunciation, or Lady Day, because on that day the message of the angel was announced to our B. Lady. Mary was at that moment, as St. Bonaventure tells us, praying earnestly in the little cottage of Nazareth for the speedy redemption of mankind. She besought the Son of God to hasten the time of his coming, and prayed that she might be so far favoured as to be permitted to serve and wait upon the holy virgin who should be chosen for his Mother. While thus engaged in prayer, behold! a heavenly light shone in her little cham-

ber, and Mary, raising her eyes, beheld, bowing before her and on bended knee, the great archangel St. Gabriel. He spoke, and, in tones of deep reverence, greeted her with those words of salutation which you so often pronounce: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women." At these words Mary, as the Holy Scripture says, "was troubled, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be." Her humility felt alarmed at hearing herself spoken of in such terms of praise, and that, too, by an angel, one of the princes of the heavenly court. St. Gabriel, however, went on to encourage her, and to announce to her the important message of which he was the bearer. "Fear not, Mary," he said, "for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus." Mary listened to these happy tidings with mingled joy and gratitude, but one thing yet troubled her. She was a pure virgin. From her earliest infancy she had vowed her virginity to God, as the most precious offering she could make to him, and there was nothing which she prized more highly than the privilege of living and dying in this holy state. Yet the angel had said that she was to become a mother. Wherefore Mary went on to ask him, "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" And the angel answering, said to her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the Power of the most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy, that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." In other words, the angel promised that, by a great miracle of the Holy Ghost, Mary should become a mother, the Mother of the Son of God, and still remain a virgin. It is for this reason that the catechism says that "God the Son took a Body and Soul like ours, *in the womb of the B. Virgin Mary.*"

The B. Virgin now knew that it was the will of Almighty God that she should be the Mother of his Divine Son made man; and so, with a heart full of gratitude for this sublime honour, but still with deep humility, she said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to thy word" (Luke i.). At that very moment,

when she gave her consent, the great mystery was accomplished. "*God the Son took flesh and was made man in the Womb of the B. Virgin Mary,*" thus uniting the two natures of God and Man in his one Person. And thus did Mary become the Mother of God, for she became the Mother of the Son of God made man.

But you will say, Was not St. Joseph the father of Jesus Christ? No, my dear children, he *was only his Guardian or Foster-Father*. If one of you had lost your mother, when you were an infant, and some kind woman had fed you, and nursed you, and brought you up, till you were as old as you are now, what would she be to you? Your mother? No, but your foster-mother. Yet you would love her very much, and almost look on her as a mother. And so did Jesus Christ love, and esteem, and honour St. Joseph, who guarded him when a child, carried him into Egypt to save him from the bloody tyrant Herod, worked for his support at the trade of a carpenter, and was to him in all things like a tender and affectionate father. It is a good thing, therefore, to pray to St. Joseph, for our B. Lord will not refuse anything to him whom he so loved and honoured upon earth.

#### ST. TERESA ON DEVOTION TO ST. JOSEPH.

The holy virgin St. Teresa was distinguished for her particular devotion to St. Joseph. She celebrated his feasts with the greatest solemnity, thanked him often for the care which he took of our B. Lady and the Child Jesus, and recommended to him all her wants. Listen to what she says on the subject of devotion to this great Saint.

"I took for my advocate and master the glorious St. Joseph, and I recommended myself much to him. I cannot remember having asked him for anything which he did not obtain. I am quite amazed when I consider the great favours our Lord has shown me through the intercession of this blessed Saint, and the many dangers, both of soul and body, from which he has delivered me. It seems that to other Saints our Lord has given power to succour us in only one kind of necessity; but this glorious Saint, I know by my own experience, assists us in all kinds of necessities. Hence our Lord, it appears, wishes us to understand that, as he was obedient to him when on earth, for he was called his father, so now in heaven he grants him whatever he asks. Would that I could persuade all men to be devout to this glorious Saint. I have never known any

one who was truly devoted to him, and who performed particular devotions in his honour, that did not advance more in virtue, for he assists in a special manner those souls who recommend themselves to him."—*Life of St. Teresa.*

Q. Where was our Saviour born ?

A. Our Saviour was born in a stable at Bethlehem.

The Son of God having become man, chose, of all other places, a poor miserable stable for the place of his birth. If he had wished, he might have been born in a palace, laid in a golden cradle, on the softest of beds, and in the midst of every comfort and luxury. You would think, perhaps, that a palace would have been a more proper place for the King of Heaven and earth to be born in. Why then did he choose to be born in a stable? To show us that the riches and comforts of this world are not what we are to seek after, but simply to do the Will of God. Besides, our B. Lord wanted to begin and suffer for our sins as soon as ever he came into the world ; so he chose to be born in the midst of cold, poverty, and neglect. Having chosen *a stable* for the place of his birth, he wished furthermore to be born *in Bethlehem*, which city the prophet Micheas had long before pointed out as the birthplace of the Messiah or Redeemer.

Now the Birth of our B. Lord at Bethlehem was brought about by the Providence of God in this way. The Emperor of Rome, Cesar Augustus, who was at that time ruler of the Jews, wishing to know the number of his subjects and to lay a tax on each, sent an order for all to go to the cities from which their families first came, to have their names entered upon the roll or register. The B. Virgin Mary with her holy spouse St. Joseph, being of the family of David, had accordingly to go to Bethlehem, where Jesse, David's father, had lived, and where David was born. Bethlehem was a long way off their little home ; for they lived at Nazareth, among the mountains of Galilee. Besides, it was the winter time, the roads were bad, and the weather bitterly cold ; but for all that they did not delay, for they knew that it is God's will that we should obey the king. So they set out on their weary journey, and after travelling for three days amid the



frost and snow, arrived, towards the evening of the third day, at the city of Bethlehem. But alas ! no one would take in the poor travellers, for the inns were full ; and, besides, the hard-hearted people thought that, being poor, they might not be able to pay for their lodging. Our B. Lady and St. Joseph, therefore, turned back to a poor stable or cattle-shed, partly hollowed out of the rock, which they had seen when they entered the town, and there they went in to spend the night. Here it was, my dear children, that our Saviour, the Son of God, was born into the world at midnight, and his holy Mother Mary, after adoring him as her God, took him into her arms, wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger (Luke ii. 7). It is said that there were an ox and an ass driven into the same stable by the cold winter's blast, and that they helped to warm the poor little Jesus with their hot breath. No doubt the angels also were there in crowds to adore him ; and some of them, as the Scripture tells us, went to announce the birth of the Redeemer to the shepherds who were keeping the night-watch over their flocks. I will tell you the history of the shepherds' coming to adore our B. Lord, as we find it related by St. Luke.

#### HISTORY OF THE SHEPHERDS.

“ And there were in the same country shepherds watching, and keeping the night-watches over their flock. And behold an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of the Lord shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them : *Fear not ; for behold I bring you tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people : for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger.*

“ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God, and saying, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.*

“ And it came to pass, after the angels departed from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, *Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us.* And they came with haste : and they found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. And seeing, they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning

this child. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen" (Luke ii.).

Q. Upon what day was he born ?

A. He was born on Christmas Day.

Our B. Lord was born upon *Christmas Day*. This great day, as you know, comes in the very middle of winter, namely, on the 25th of December. It is sometimes called the Feast of the Nativity, because the Nativity or Birth of Jesus took place on this day ; so it is in fact our B. Lord's birthday. Christmas Day is a day of great rejoicing both in heaven and on earth, since the coming of Jesus Christ into the world brought glory to God and hope and peace to man. Hence the angels, when on this day they told the good tidings of our B. Lord's birth to the shepherds, sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will" (Luke ii. 14).

You will notice also that Christmas bears a good old Catholic name, for it means *the Mass of Christ*, that is to say, the Mass which is said in honour of his Birth. There are several other feasts which keep, even among Protestants, the old names which they had in those times when all were united in the one Catholic faith. These feasts bear witness that the Catholic religion is the old religion, and the religion of our forefathers. Thus we have Candlemas Day, that is, the day on which candles were blessed and carried at Mass (namely, on our B. Lady's Purification) ; Martinmas, on which day Mass was said in honour of St. Martin ; Michaelmas, or the Mass of St. Michael, &c. From these names, it is easy to see that in those days the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which Protestants have done away with, was offered up throughout the whole country.

At the time when our B. Lord was born upon earth, other nations besides the Jews were in daily expectation of his coming. The traditions which had been handed down from father to son for many hundred years, and the prophecies which had become more generally known during the captivity of the Jews and under the Grecian Empire, all pointed out that the time was now at hand when

the Saviour of all nations would appear in the land of the Jews. Hence it was, that about this time many were on the look-out for the appearance of the famous star predicted by the false prophet Balaam more than a thousand years before, which was considered to be a sure sign of the birth of the expected Messiah. The history of the appearance of this star to the three wise men, or, as they are often called, the three kings, is thus related in the Holy Scripture.

#### ADORATION OF THE MAGI.

"When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of King Herod, behold there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying, *Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East and are come to adore him.*

"And King Herod, learning this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And, assembling together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ should be born. But they said to him, *In Bethlehem of Juda, for so it is written by the prophet: 'And thou, Bethlehem, the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come forth the captain that shall rule my people Israel.'* Then Herod, privately calling the wise men, learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared to them; and, sending them into Bethlehem, said, *Go and diligently inquire after the child, and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore him.*

"Who, having heard the King, went their way; and behold the star which they had seen in the East, went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was. And seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And entering into the house, they found the child, with Mary, his mother; and, falling down, they adored him. And, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And, having received an answer in sleep, that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their own country" (Matt. ii.).

Thus, my dear children, did our B. Lord, at his first coming into the world, call the *Gentiles*, that is to say, all other nations besides the Jews, in the persons of the three wise men, to adore him, showing thereby that he came to open to all mankind the gates of heaven. In memory of this great event, the Church has instituted a solemn festival, which is called the Epiphany or *Appearance* of the star, and sometimes Twelfth Day, because it falls on the 6th of January, the twelfth day after Christmas.

## SEVENTH INSTRUCTION.

*Fourth Article—Jesus Christ—His Passion and Death—  
The Sign of the Cross.*

Q. What is the fourth article of the Creed?

A. The fourth article of the Creed is "Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried."

The fourth article of the Creed, my dear children, is about the Sufferings, Death, and Burial of our B. Lord. The whole life of Jesus Christ, from his Birth in the stable to his last expiring sigh upon the cross, was indeed a life of suffering; but this article treats only of the torments which he endured immediately before his Death, and which we commonly call his Sacred Passion. The Apostles' Creed says that he *suffered under Pontius Pilate*, because at that time Pontius Pilate was Governor of Judea; the Jews being no longer a free people, but subject to the Romans, who had sent Pontius Pilate to rule over part of their country. It was to him that the Jews accused our B. Redeemer, for they had no power to crucify any one themselves. Pilate was a weak man, and, though he declared our Lord to be innocent of the charges brought against him, he nevertheless condemned him to the cruel death of the cross to please the Jews, and for fear of them making some complaint against him to the Roman Emperor; for they said, "If thou release this man, thou art not Cesar's friend" (John xix. 12). Thus, a fatal human respect led him to commit a crying act of injustice, and to crucify the Son of God.

Q. What were the chief sufferings of Christ?

A. The chief sufferings of Christ were—First, his agony and his sweat of blood in the garden; secondly, his being scourged at the pillar, and crowned with thorns; and thirdly, his carrying his cross, his crucifixion and his death between two thieves.

Q. What are all these sufferings called?

A. These sufferings are called the Passion of Jesus Christ.

In these answers, my dear children, are enumerated the principal sufferings which our B. Lord endured for the

love of us, and which we commonly call his *Passion*, a Latin word which of itself means Suffering. You will notice that the different torments here mentioned are the same as those which are commemorated in the sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary, namely, the Agony in the garden, the Scourging at the pillar, the Crowning with thorns, the Carriage of the cross, and the Crucifixion ; so that you see that the sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary contain in themselves a short history of our Lord's Passion.

The first great suffering, which our B. Redeemer endured in his Passion, was *his agony and his sweat of blood*. This took place *in the garden* of Olives, whither our Lord, on the night before he was crucified, had gone to pray, accompanied by his three Apostles, Peter, James, and John. Having left them at a little distance, he began his prayer, but became so overcome with the sight of our sins and ingratitude, and the natural fear of the torments he was about to endure, that he fell into a cruel agony of mind and body, and drops of blood came trickling down like sweat from every pore of his skin. It was on this occasion that he thrice repeated that beautiful prayer, "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. But yet, not my will, but thine be done" (Matt. xxvi. 39 ; Luke xxii. 42). Then an angel appeared from heaven to comfort him ; and Jesus, knowing that it was his Father's Will that he should now enter upon his Passion, arose, and called his sleeping Apostles to come with him to meet the traitor Judas, who was at that moment entering the garden to apprehend him.

The *Scourging at the Pillar* and the *Crowning with thorns*, the two next sufferings of our Lord here mentioned, took place at the house of Pilate, the Roman Governor, wherefore they are joined together in the words of the catechism. When our innocent Redeemer, after suffering the most barbarous treatment from the Jews throughout the whole night, had been condemned to death by Pilate, he was given up by him into the hands of the soldiers to be scourged and afterwards crucified. These cruel men stripped Jesus of his clothes, then tied him to a pillar, and scourged him barbarously with leathern

thongs. The number of the stripes which they gave him was revealed to St. Bridget to have been above five thousand. The whole ground about was covered with blood, and our B. Lord would have expired under the cruel torture, had he not supported himself by a miracle for fresh sufferings. And, indeed, no sooner had he been scourged, than "the soldiers, plating a crown of thorns, put it upon his head, and put on him a purple garment. And they came to him and said, *Hail, king of the Jews*, and they gave him blows" (John xix. 2, 3). This torment of the *Crowning with thorns* was inflicted on our Lord by the sheer cruelty of the Jews, for he was not condemned by Pilate to suffer this barbarous torture. It was done in mockery of his kingly power; for the Jews had accused our Lord of seeking to make himself king, and he himself had admitted to Pilate that he was a king, though he spoke of a spiritual, and not of an earthly kingdom. The pain and agony which Jesus suffered from this cruel crowning must have been intense, for the thorns of that country are long and sharp, and were on this occasion driven in by the blows of his persecutors. Pilate himself, when he beheld our B. Redeemer reduced to this pitiable state, was touched with compassion, and, hoping that the Jews, if they saw him, would be moved to some feelings of pity, brought him out to them with the crown of thorns on his head, the purple garment on his shoulders, and the reed in his right hand, and introduced him to them, saying, "Behold the Man." But it was all in vain; the Jews only called the more loudly, "Crucify him, crucify him" (John xix. 5, 6). The *Carrying of the cross*, the *Crucifixion*, and the *Death of our Lord between two thieves*, are next mentioned in the catechism. No sooner had the unjust judge Pilate pronounced sentence of death, condemning our B. Lord to be crucified, than the heavy cross, on which he was to suffer, was laid upon his bleeding shoulders, and he was made to carry it through the streets of Jerusalem and up the hill of Calvary to the place of public execution. Weak, and fainting with hunger and thirst and loss of blood, he fell to the ground several times in the course of this painful journey. His enemies

seeing this, and fearing that he would die on the way, obliged a man named Simon, of the city of Cyrene, whom they met coming into Jerusalem, to help Jesus to carry his cross. This no doubt is to teach us that if we wish to follow our B. Lord to heaven, we must walk in his footsteps, bearing our cross after him by submitting patiently to the labours and sufferings of this short life, and embracing them willingly for the love of God.

It was by the cruel punishment of Crucifixion that our loving Jesus finally accomplished our Redemption. Having arrived on the summit of Calvary, he was rudely seized by the executioners, again stripped of his clothes, laid upon the cross, and pierced through the hands and feet with large iron nails, which were driven by repeated strokes of the hammer through his Sacred Flesh deep into the wood of the cross. The cross was then raised in the air, and amid the jeers of the people allowed to fall with a heavy jolt into the hole prepared for it. Who can imagine the horrible sufferings which our B. Lord endured during this cruel torment, and which he bore with such patience through love for us, that the Holy Scripture compares him to a meek and gentle lamb, which makes no resistance and utters no complaint when violence is offered it? "He shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth" (Isa. liii. 7). For three hours that Jesus hung upon the cross, he suffered all the horrors of the most cruel martyrdom. His body was racked with pain, and his heart was torn with grief at the sight of our sins and ingratitude. He had also to endure the scoffs of the soldiers, the mockery of the Jews, and the reproaches of the impenitent thief, one of the two who were crucified with him. The sight of his afflicted Mother standing at his feet, with her heart pierced by a sword of sorrow, also caused him great anguish, and, to crown all, he was seemingly abandoned by his Heavenly Father, his soul being deprived of all comfort and plunged in deep desolation. Yet, in the midst of all these torments he thought of us, prayed for us, and loved us, as his seven last words show, particularly that by which he gave us to the B. Virgin to be her children, and asked her

to become our mother (John xix. 26). At length, crying out with a loud voice, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46), he expired.

In the beautiful history of the intended sacrifice of Isaac by his father Abraham, we have a striking figure of our B. Lord bearing his cross to Calvary, and dying upon it in obedience to his Father's Will. Listen to this touching story, as it is related in the Holy Scripture.

#### SACRIFICE OF ISAAC.

"After these things God tempted Abraham, and said to him, *Abraham, Abraham.* And he answered, *Here I am.* He said to him, *Take thy only-begotten son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and go into the land of Vision, and there thou shalt offer him for a holocaust, upon one of the mountains which I will show thee.*

"So Abraham rising up in the night, saddled his ass, and took with him two young men and Isaac his son; and when he had cut wood for the holocaust, he went his way to the place which God had commanded him.

"And on the third day, lifting up his eyes, he saw the place afar off. And he said to the young men, *Stay you here with the ass; I and the boy will go with speed as far as yonder, and after we have worshipped, will return to you.*

"And he took the wood for the holocaust, and laid it upon Isaac his son, and he himself carried in his hands fire and a sword. And as the two went on together, Isaac said to his father, *My father,* and he answered, *What wilt thou, son? Behold, saith he, fire and wood; where is the victim for the holocaust?* And Abraham said, *God will provide himself a victim for an holocaust, my son.* So they went on together.

"And they came to the place which God had shown him, where he built an altar, and laid the wood in order upon it; and when he had bound Isaac his son, he laid him on the altar upon the pile of wood. And he put forth his hand and took the sword to sacrifice his son.

"And behold an angel of the Lord from heaven called to him, saying, *Abraham, Abraham.* And he answered, *Here I am.* And he said to him, *Lay not thy hand upon the boy, neither do thou anything to him; now I know thou fearest God, and hast not spared thy only-begotten son for my sake.* Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw behind his back a ram amongst the briers, sticking fast by the horns, which he took and offered for a holocaust instead of his son" (Gen. xxii.).

The different circumstances of our B. Lord's Passion had been clearly foretold by the inspired prophets long



before our B. Saviour came into the world, and their prophecies were carefully preserved in the Holy Scriptures, which were read and explained in the Jewish synagogue every Sabbath. Thus the Jews were without excuse in rejecting the teaching of the Apostles. Listen, for example, to what holy David, one of the prophets, uttered a thousand years before our Lord's Crucifixion respecting the circumstances which attended his death.

#### PROPHECY OF DAVID.

1. David, speaking in the person of our B. Lord, exclaimed, "O God, my God, look upon me; why hast thou forsaken me?" (Ps. xxi. 1).

Jesus Christ, when expiring on the cross, cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. xxvii. 46).

2. David, in the same spirit of prophecy, exclaims, "I am a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people" (Ps. xxi. 7).

Jesus Christ was treated as the vilest of criminals. Barabbas, even, who was a murderer, was preferred before him.

3. David says of our B. Lord, "All they that saw me have laughed me to scorn: they have spoken with the lips, and wagged the head. *He hoped in the Lord, let him deliver him; let him save him, seeing he delighteth in him*" (Ps. xxi. 8, 9).

Of Jesus Christ the Holy Gospel says, "They that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads. In like manner also the chief priests with the scribes and ancients mocking, said, *He saved others, himself he cannot save. He trusted in God, let him now deliver him if he will have him*" (Matt. xxvii. 39-43).

4. David adds, "They have dug my hands and feet. They have numbered all my bones" (Ps. xxi. 17).

The Jews pierced our Lord's hands and feet with nails, and laid his bones bare with their cruel scourging.

5. David again prophesies. "They parted my garments amongst them, and upon my vesture they cast lots" (Ps. xxi. 19).

Of Jesus the Gospel says, "The soldiers took his garments (and they made four parts, to every soldier a part) and also his coat. Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said then one to another, Let us not cut it, but let us cast lots for it whose it shall be," &c. (John xix. 23, 24).

Do not these words of King David read more like a history of our Lord's Passion, written by an eye-witness, than like a prophecy uttered a thousand years before the events happened?

Q. Why did our Saviour suffer ?

A. Our Saviour suffered to atone for our sins, and to purchase for us eternal life.

Q. Why is Jesus Christ called our Redeemer ?

A. Jesus Christ is called our Redeemer, because his Precious Blood is the price by which we were ransomed.

I have already told you, my dear children, in speaking of our B. Lord's Incarnation, that sin, being an offence against God who is the Infinite Good, is so great an evil that all that man can do or suffer is insufficient to atone for it. For this reason, as you know, the Son of God became man, that being man, he might be able to suffer, and being at the same time God, his sufferings might be sufficient to pay the debt which was due to God by the sin of man. This is the great and wonderful mystery of the Love of Jesus, by which he has established the strongest claim to our everlasting love and gratitude. By suffering and dying *to atone for our sins, and to purchase for us eternal life* which we had forfeited by sin, he has proved to us how infinitely the love of God for his creatures surpasses the strongest love of man for his fellow-men. For where shall we find the friend so generous and devoted as to be ready to lay down his own life to save that of his dearest friend, much less to die for one who was his bitter enemy ? And yet Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has died for *us*, who were his enemies, nay who crucified him by our sins. He has given his own most Precious Blood as *the price by which we were ransomed* from the slavery of Satan and restored to our rights as children of God and heirs of heaven. Hence he is justly called our Ransomer or *Redeemer*.

Since, then, Christ died to save us from the punishment of sin, it follows that our sins were the real cause of our B. Lord's Death. I say *our* sins, because it was not only for the sin of Adam that Jesus suffered and died, or for the sins that were committed before he himself came upon earth, but it was also for the sins that are committed daily by each one of us. For all sin is an offence against God, and requires a proper atonement or satisfaction to be made for it,—an atonement which, as you have seen, none

but God himself could make. It was not, indeed, strictly necessary that our B. Lord should die so cruel a death. One single suffering, one drop of blood, would have been sufficient to redeem mankind; for even the smallest suffering of a God, made man, is of infinite value, and is more than enough to atone for the sins of the whole world. Why then did our Lord suffer so much? To give more honour to his Heavenly Father, to show us the greatness of his Love, and to inspire us with a deeper horror for sin, which caused him such cruel torments. He would have us, for very love and gratitude, give over sinning.

We should also learn, from the cruel sufferings and death of our B. Lord, to embrace willingly, for the love of him, the sufferings and trials which he may see good to send us,—nay, to be even ready, were it necessary, to lay down our lives for him who died for us. It was the thought of what Jesus had suffered for the love of them, which made the most cruel torments so sweet to the martyrs, and caused them to go as readily and joyfully to the place of execution as others will go to an entertainment or marriage feast. Listen, for example, to the following beautiful history of

#### ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE.

St. Andrew, the elder brother of St. Peter, and the first of the Apostles whom Christ called, followed his Divine Master to heaven by the same royal way of the cross. It is related that when he was led out to be crucified, as soon as he perceived at a distance the cross on which he was to suffer, he cried out, in a transport of love, "Hail, precious cross, that hast been consecrated by the Body of my Lord, and adorned with his Limbs as with rich jewels! I come to thee exulting and glad; receive me with joy into thy arms. O good cross, that hast received beauty from our Lord's Limbs, I have ardently loved thee; long have I desired and sought thee; now thou art found by me, and art made ready for my longing soul. Receive me into thy arms, taking me from among men, and present me to my Master, that he, who redeemed me *on* thee, may receive me *by* thee." So saying, he gave up his body to the executioners, and finished his holy life by a glorious death.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

You perhaps do not know, my dear children, that, as St. Patrick is the patron of Ireland, and St. George of

England, so is the Apostle St. Andrew the patron of Scotland ; and the cross which he loved so ardently has always a place on her national flag.

#### LORD, WHERE ART THOU GOING ?

The little chapel of the "*Domine quo vadis, Lord, where art thou going ?*" situated on one of the roads that lead out of the city of Rome, brings to the mind of the traveller a beautiful incident that took place on that very spot eighteen hundred years ago.

It is related in the life of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, that the Emperor Nero, having raised a cruel persecution against the Church, the Christians of Rome earnestly entreated St. Peter to withdraw from the city for a while, that he might preserve a life so valuable to the whole Church. The Apostle, though unwilling, yielded to their entreaties, and under the darkness of night made his escape through the Appian gate, and turned his back on Rome. He had not proceeded far, when he met our B. Lord bearing his cross, and toiling painfully under the weight of it, on his road towards the city. St. Peter, thunderstruck at what he saw, exclaimed, "Lord, where art thou going ?" On which our Saviour, casting upon him a look of gentle reproach, replied, "I am going to Rome to be crucified again." St. Peter at once understood that it was the Will of God that he should return to Rome and there suffer ; he accordingly re-passed the gate and re-entered the city. Soon after he was apprehended and confined in the Mamertine prison, along with St. Paul. Being condemned to be crucified, and led to execution, he begged as a special favour that he might be crucified with his head downwards, saying that he did not think himself worthy to suffer in the same manner as his Divine Master. His request was granted, and thus he added to the glory of martyrdom the crown of humility.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

#### THE MARTYRS OF JAPAN.

During the cruel persecution raised by the Japanese Emperor Taicosama against the true religion, a glorious band of twenty-six Christians were condemned to suffer the barbarous punishment of crucifixion. Among this noble company of heroes were three young boys, the oldest of whom was not more than fifteen years of age. These generous youths showed no less courage than those who were more advanced in years ; and the youngest especially, a boy of ten, named Louis, was remarkable for the extreme eagerness and joy with which he welcomed his cruel martyrdom. The Japanese general, touched with pity at his youth and amiable qualities, offered him, not only his life, but a place in his own household, on condition that he would abandon his religion ; but Louis nobly answered, "On such a worthless condition as you propose, I reject the offer of life. Would you have me barter eternal happiness for

a few fleeting years of temporal existence?" The same generous child, on arriving at the place of execution, as soon as the cross which was prepared for him, and which was smaller and shorter than the others, was pointed out, ran eagerly to it and stretched himself upon it, exclaiming, "Paradise, Paradise!" The same cheerful readiness was displayed by the rest of this noble band, who esteemed themselves happy to die for Jesus, and to die on the cross. Their hands and feet being secured to the wood by means of iron rings, according to the custom of the country, the crosses were raised in the air, and let fall into the holes which had been dug to receive them. On being raised aloft upon his cross, the young Antony, who had been taught by the Jesuit fathers to chant the Divine Office, began to intone the psalm "*Laudate pueri Dominum; Praise the Lord, ye children.*" Meanwhile the rest of the holy martyrs encouraged each other, and exhorted the people, who stood in crowds to witness the moving sight. At length, at a given signal, the executioners approached, and, passing from one to another among the glorious band, pierced them with their spears, and thus set free their happy souls to fly to the embraces of their crucified God. This noble company of martyrs have been lately canonised by Pope Pius IX.—*Jesuit Martyrs of Japan.*

In the eagerness of these glorious martyrs, some of them mere children like yourselves, to suffer and die for Christ, you see the exact fulfilment of those words of our Lord, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself" (John xii. 32). And again, "Out of the mouth of infants and of sucklings thou hast perfected praise" (Matt. xxi. 16).

Q. On what day did he die?

A. He died on Good Friday.

The day on which our B. Redeemer died on the cross, is called *Good Friday*. It is called *Good*, because the Goodness of God to man has been more displayed on this day than on any other, namely, by his dying a cruel death to redeem us. Moreover, there is no other day in the year on which so great a good has come to us, as on this day, on which the anger of God was appeased, and the work of our Redemption accomplished.

To remind us of the great mysteries of the Passion and Death of our Lord, and also to excite us to a lively sorrow for our sins which have been the cause of his sufferings, the Church has appointed that on this day the cross, which

has been veiled with purple in sign of grief since Passion Sunday, should be uncovered, and that all the faithful should come and kneel before and kiss the image of our crucified Saviour. This beautiful ceremony is called the *Kissing of the Cross*, and sometimes the *Adoration of the Cross*. Protestants say that this is idolatry, but you know very well that you do not adore the cross, as if it were God, which would be idolatry indeed, but that you honour it with a less or inferior honour out of respect to him who died upon it. It is he who died upon the cross whom we adore; and, out of reverence and love for him, we kneel before and kiss the Crucifix, which reminds us of his sufferings. This lesser and relative honour used in former times to be called *adoration*, and in this sense the word *adoration* is often used in Scripture, as when we read of Abraham falling down and adoring the three angels who were sent to destroy the wicked city of Sodom (Gen. xviii. 2). If, then, you take *adoration* to mean, as it used to mean, and as it still means in speaking of the cross, a less and inferior honour which may be paid to creatures, it is true to say that we do *adore the cross*. But if you mean by *adoration* that highest kind of honour, which can only be paid to God, and which is now the general meaning of the word, then it is not the cross that we adore, but *God who died upon the cross*.

#### CONVERSION OF ST. JOHN GUALBERT.

St. John Gualbert, a holy monk, and the founder of a religious order, may be said to have owed his conversion to an act of virtue, which he performed one Good Friday in honour of Jesus crucified. He was at that time a gay young nobleman, full of spirit and courage, but unhappily he cherished in his heart a bitter feeling of revenge against a neighbour who in a quarrel had killed his brother Hugh. John had determined to take the life of the murderer wherever he should find him, and was encouraged in this resolution by his father, who told him that this was the only way to wipe out the insult offered to the honour of the family.

While the young nobleman was occupied only with thoughts of revenge, and was eagerly seeking an opportunity for the commission of the deed, it happened that, riding to Florence upon Good Friday, he met the murderer in so narrow a passage that it was impossible for either of them to avoid the other. John, who was armed and attended by his servant, immediately drew his sword, and was

going to despatch his enemy, when suddenly the latter, falling on his knees and stretching out his arms in the form of a cross, besought him, for the love of Jesus, who was crucified on that very day, to spare his life. The remembrance of Christ, who prayed for his murderers on the cross, exceedingly affected the young nobleman. He threw himself from his horse and gently raised the suppliant with his hand, saying, "I can refuse nothing that is asked of me for the sake of Jesus Christ. I not only give you your life, but also my friendship for ever. Pray for me that God may pardon me my sins." They then embraced each other and parted. Continuing his journey, John entered the first church that he came to, and, prostrating himself in prayer before a large Crucifix, begged with many tears that God would pardon his sins. Hereupon the crucifix bowed its head, as if in token that his prayer was heard, and that the generous sacrifice which he had made of his resentment was accepted by God. Attached to this church was a Benedictine Monastery, to which the young nobleman repaired, as soon as he had finished his prayer, in order to beg the favour of admission. His request was granted, and from that time he gave himself up entirely to prayer and works of penance, by which he made such rapid progress in virtue that he became an illustrious Saint and a bright ornament of the Church.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

Q. Where did he die?

A. He died on Mount Calvary.

Our B. Lord died *upon Mount Calvary*. This, my dear children, was the public place of execution, and was situated just outside of the city of Jerusalem. The word Calvary means properly *the place of skulls*, and it was so called, no doubt, from the number of human skulls to be found in the ground about, for the criminals were commonly buried close by the spot where they were executed. Jesus, also, was buried at a little distance from the spot where he had suffered; but his Sacred Body was laid by St. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus in a private tomb, hewn out of the solid rock, and in which no man had yet been laid. This tomb is situated at the foot of Mount Calvary, and a splendid church was afterwards erected over it by St. Helen, which is called the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

#### FINDING OF THE TRUE CROSS.

When Constantine the Great had, by his miraculous victory over the Pagan Emperor Maxentius, put a stop to the long persecution, and established the Christian religion throughout his dominions, his pious mother, St. Helen, though then eighty years of age, undertook

a journey to Palestine to satisfy her devotion by visiting the Holy Places. Being arrived at Jerusalem, she was filled with a longing desire of finding the very cross on which our B. Lord had suffered and died. On consulting the oldest of the inhabitants, she was informed that if she could only find the place of our Lord's Burial, she would be sure to find his cross at a little distance, as it was the custom among the Jews to bury the instruments of execution near to the body of the criminal. St. Helen accordingly caused the profane buildings in the neighbourhood to be cleared away, especially a temple of Venus, which the pagans had built over the very spot where our B. Lord had been buried. Then, digging to a great depth, she found not only the tomb, but likewise three crosses, with the nails and other instruments of the Passion.

It was now plain that one of these three crosses was that on which Jesus had died, and that the other two were the crosses of the two thieves. But how were they to distinguish the one of which they were in search? In this difficulty the holy Bishop Macarius, knowing that one of the principal ladies of the city lay extremely ill, suggested to the Empress that the three crosses should be carried in solemn procession to the sick person, not doubting that God would discover by a miracle which was the cross on which his Divine Son had died for our Redemption. This being done, St. Macarius, after earnest prayer, applied the crosses singly to the sick lady, who at the touch of the third was restored to perfect health. St. Helen, filled with joy, built a magnificent church over the spot where she had discovered the sacred relic, and there placed part of the precious wood, enclosed in a costly case. The remainder she carried to Europe, and deposited a portion of it at Rome, in the Church of the Holy Cross, which she built to receive it, and where it remains to the present day.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

Q. Why do we make the sign of the cross?

A. We make the sign of the cross—First, to put us in mind of the Blessed Trinity; and, secondly, to remind us that God the Son died upon the cross for us.

The sign of the cross is the mark and badge of a Christian. It is by this sign that we publicly profess our faith in the B. Trinity and in Jesus Christ crucified. This holy sign has been used in all ages of the Church, and comes down from the time of the Apostles. Tertullian, who lived about 150 years after Christ, tells us that in his time the Christians used it at the beginning of every action. "In every action," he says, "when we come in or go out, when we put on our clothes, sit down to table, or go to bed, we make the sign of the cross upon our foreheads."\* Armed with this sign, the early Chris-

\* Tertul., *De Corona*, c. iii.



tians feared not to encounter the rack, the sword, the fire, or the most deadly instruments of torture ; for they knew that our B. Lord, who died upon the cross, would support them in the combat. Frequently the plans of the persecutors were disconcerted by the use of this sign. Thus the martyr St. Tiburtius, condemned under the Emperor Diocletian to walk through a blazing fire, made the sign of the cross over it, and walked over the burning coals without experiencing any injury.

Read the lives of the Saints, my dear children, and you will find that devils have been cast out, the sea calmed, the sick cured, the dead raised to life, and the most wonderful miracles performed by the devout use of the sign of the cross. The Church accordingly, knowing well the power of this holy sign, uses it continually in the daily office recited by her ministers, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in the administration of the Sacraments, and in all her sacred ceremonies. She exhorts her children also to use it frequently, both as a profession of their faith and a protection against the artifices of the devil ; for the devil trembles and is confounded at the sight of this holy sign, knowing that our Divine Redeemer has overcome him by the cross. Like a child that fears the rod with which he has been beaten, so does the wicked spirit tremble and flee away when he sees us arm ourselves with the sign of the cross. We should, therefore, often make use of it when we find ourselves tempted to sin. If we are by ourselves, we could make it as we usually do ; but if we are with others, we could make a little cross with our thumb upon our breasts, repeating the words in secret. As soon as we wake in the morning, our first act should be to make the sign of the cross, and it should be our last act when we lie down to sleep, that we may both rise and sleep under the shadow of the cross of Christ. We should also make it at the beginning and end of our prayers, whenever we enter a church, and before we commence any important action.

#### TRIUMPH OF THE CROSS.

After the cruel persecution of the Christians by the Roman Emperors had lasted for nearly 300 years, Almighty God sent peace

to his Church by the miraculous victory of Constantine over the pagan Emperor Maxentius. On the day before the battle there appeared in the sky, in sight of Constantine and the whole army, a brilliant cross of light, with this inscription, "In this thou shalt conquer." The following night our B. Lord appeared to Constantine in his sleep, with the same sign, and ordered him to make a copy of it, and use it as his standard in the coming battle. Constantine rose early, ordered the standard to be constructed, and caused the sacred sign of the cross to be engraved on his own helmet and the shields of his soldiers. He then marched out to battle, and gained a complete victory. On the same day he entered Rome in triumph, but instead of going to offer sacrifice to the false gods of his ancestors, he published everywhere the vision which he had beheld, and declared that his splendid victory was due only to the God of the Christians. In gratitude for this favour, he not only put a stop to the bloody persecution, which had been raging for so many years, but ordered the worship of idols to be abolished, and the Christian religion to be followed throughout his dominions. His own conversion, which took place at the same time, was soon followed by that of the greater portion of his subjects.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

Q. What puts us in mind of the Blessed Trinity when we make the sign of the cross?

A. The words, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," put us in mind of the Blessed Trinity.

Yes, it is *the words* that we say which put us in mind of the B. Trinity. For what is the B. Trinity? It is the mystery of three Persons in One God. Now, when we make the sign of the cross, we show that there is only One God in Three Persons by saying, "In the *name*," and not in the *names*, "of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." For the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost have one and the same name, which is the Holy Name of God, and one and the same nature, which is the nature of God. The words *In the name* show us, therefore, the unity or one nature of God; and the words *Of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, show the three Persons in God. Thus, the words of the sign of the cross are a profession of faith in the B. Trinity.

Q. What reminds us that Christ died for us on the cross?

A. The very form of the cross, which we make on ourselves, reminds us that Christ died for us on the cross.

As the *words* of the sign of the cross are a profession of faith in the B. Trinity, so *the form of the cross, which we*

*make on ourselves*, is a profession of faith in Jesus Christ crucified. Formerly, my dear children, the cross was considered a mark of disgrace, and whoever died upon the cross was looked upon as infamous ; but, since the Son of God redeemed us by his death upon the cross, it has been considered the glorious mark and badge of a Christian. The Church of Christ has adopted this holy sign as her standard, and places it everywhere as the symbol of hope and the pledge of victory. You see it on her churches, above her altars, on her sacred vestments, in her solemn processions, at the tombs of her departed children ; and were you to pass over to Catholic countries, you would behold it at the entrance of the ports, at the corners of the streets, on the summits of the hills. Everywhere you would see the cross, the standard of the Church, the standard of Jesus Christ,—that glorious sign which makes the heart of the Christian rejoice, and fills him with courage and hope. But the Church wishes also that her children should bear this sacred mark upon their persons, which we do by frequently signing ourselves with the sign of the cross.

Now, let me see in what manner you make the sign of the cross. Not hastily, I hope, or irreverently, as if you thought not of what you are doing, or as if you were playing with your fingers, but slowly, reverently, and devoutly ; slowly and reverently because it is a solemn and a sacred act ; and devoutly, because if made with devotion it will be the means of drawing down the grace of God upon the soul. And notice, it should be a real cross, from the head to the breast, and from the left to the right shoulder, and should be made while the words are pronounced, “ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Then join your hands and say “ Amen.”

There is another way of making the sign of the cross, which is followed both by Priest and people in the Holy Mass, at the beginning of the Gospel, namely, by marking a cross with the thumb upon the forehead, mouth, and breast. This we do to show that we not only cherish the love of Jesus crucified in our hearts, but that we are ready

to bear witness to him with our lips, and openly to profess his Name before all mankind by our good and holy lives.

#### THE POISONED CUP.

We read in the life of the great St. Benedict, that the fame of the holy life which he led in a solitary cave of the mountains having spread far and wide, he was invited to govern a monastery in which the religious rule was but very badly observed. St. Benedict for a long time resisted the entreaties of the monks, remarking that *his* manner of life and *theirs* would never agree. Being at length persuaded to undertake the charge, he did his best to introduce into the monastery the strict observance of the rule, but only succeeded in exciting against himself the hatred of certain wicked monks, who formed a plot to take away his life. They accordingly mixed poison with his drink, and brought it to him as he sat at table with the rest of the community. St. Benedict, according to his custom, extended his hand to make over the glass the sign of the cross, and at the very moment when he formed the holy sign, the glass, which was held at a little distance, was shattered to pieces, as if it had received a sudden blow from a stone. Thereupon the Saint, as St. Gregory, who relates this history, observes, "quickly perceived that the glass had death in its contents, since it was not able to bear the sign of life." Wherefore, rising from table, he thus addressed the assembled monks: "Brethren, did I not give you warning that my manner of life and yours would not agree? Go, therefore, and seek a superior according to your liking, for me you can have no longer with you." Having said this, he at once quitted the monastery, and returned to his beloved solitude.—*Dialogues of St. Gregory.*

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#### EIGHTH INSTRUCTION.

*Fifth Article—Jesus Christ—His Descent into Hell and Resurrection — Sixth Article — Jesus Christ — His Ascension.*

Q. What is the fifth article of the Creed?

A. The fifth article of the Creed is, "He descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead."

This article contains the history of our Lord during the three days which followed his death, that is to say, from the afternoon of Good Friday till the morning of Easter Sunday. You will notice that it is divided into two parts;

the first speaks of our Lord's Descent into hell, and the second of his Resurrection from the dead.

Q. What do you mean by the words, "He descended into hell"?

A. By the words, "He descended into hell," I mean, that as soon as Christ was dead, his blessed Soul went down into that part of hell called Limbo.

Q. What do you mean by Limbo?

A. By Limbo I mean a place of rest where the souls of the just who died before Christ were detained.

You see, then, my dear children, that when we say that our B. Lord *descended into hell*, we do not mean that he went down into that place of torments where the devils and the souls of the damned are. No, never will those unhappy beings be gladdened with the light of his beautiful countenance. Could they behold him, the darkness of hell would become light as the heavens, and they would forget their torments in gazing on his Beauty and in the joy of his Divine Presence.

Whither was it, then, that our Saviour went? It was to *Limbo*, which was not a place of torments, but a *place of rest*,—not the dwelling-place of the damned, but a place *where the souls of the just*, that is, of those good and holy men, *who had died before Christ, were detained*, or kept until his coming. In fact, it was a kind of middle place, neither heaven nor hell, as purgatory is a kind of middle place, but with this difference, that purgatory is a place of *punishment*, where souls suffer for a time on account of their sins; but Limbo was a place of *rest*, where the souls of those holy persons who had died without sin of their own committing, or who had already satisfied the Justice of God, were kept for a time until the coming of our Divine Redeemer. Here they had long and anxiously expected the dawning of that happy day on which the Son of God, by his death on the cross, would open the gates of heaven and put an end to their imprisonment. At length the long looked for day arrived, and no sooner had our Lord expired upon the cross, than his B. Soul, leaving his Sacred Body, went down to Limbo to carry to those captive souls the glad tidings of their Redemption. You may imagine what joy there must have been in Limbo

on that occasion. How those holy souls would flock about their loving Saviour to adore, to praise, and to thank him !

Do you know, my dear children, the names of any who are likely to have been in Limbo on that happy day ? No doubt our first parents, Adam and Eve, who had done a long and severe penance for their sin, of which it is commonly believed that they sincerely repented. Then there would be the innocent Abel, and the holy patriarch Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph ; Moses, also, and Samuel, David, and the prophets. There would be also thousands of others who had led good and virtuous lives, or who had during life atoned for their sins by true repentance and works of penance, rendered pleasing to God by the merits of the Saviour to come, or else who had passed through the purifying flames of purgatory. Last of all, there would be St. Joseph, the foster-father of our Lord and spouse of the B. Virgin, who had a few years before died peacefully in the arms of Jesus and Mary. But you will wonder, perhaps, why such great Saints were kept waiting so long in Limbo. Tell me, then,

**Q.** Why were they detained in Limbo ?

**A.** They were detained in Limbo because they could not go up to the Kingdom of Heaven till Christ had opened it for them.

Yes, none could go up to heaven till our B. Saviour had first entered it. But what is the reason why they could not, if they were good and holy, and kept the commandments ? It was because the gates of heaven had been closed against the whole human race since the sin of our first parents ; God was angry with man, and his anger had not yet been appeased. Adam had toiled and laboured, and watered the ground, which he tilled, with tears of repentance. His descendants, too, had suffered the bitter consequences of his crime and their own fresh offences ; but all the sufferings of guilty man could not make a sufficient atonement to God for one single sin. It required nothing less than the sufferings of a God, made man, to effect this ; and though Almighty God, in his Infinite Goodness, promised such a Redeemer to our first parents,

hundreds—nay, thousands—of years passed away and he came not. Yet, for all that, those who died before his coming were not lost, provided that they believed in the Saviour who was promised, hoped in his Goodness, loved him with their whole heart, and sincerely repented of their sins. This was sufficient to restore them to the favour of God through the merits of the Redeemer who was to come. But they could not enter heaven before he *had* come, to pay the debt due to the Justice of God by his Passion and Death, and, therefore, they were detained in Limbo until his coming. Now, when our B. Lord expired on the cross, the debt *was* paid, and his Divine Soul, leaving for three short days his Sacred Body, hastened down to Limbo to bear to those holy souls, who had so long and ardently expected him, the news of their approaching deliverance. Yet, a few short days and they should ascend with him, in joyful company, to take possession of his heavenly kingdom on the day of his Ascension, when he would present them to his Heavenly Father as the first-fruits of his glorious victory.

Q. What do you mean by the words, "The third day he rose again from the dead"?

A. By the words, "The third day he rose again from the dead," I mean, that after Christ had been dead and buried part of three days, he raised his blessed Body to life again on the third day.

The second part of the fifth article is about our B. Lord's Resurrection, which took place on the third day after he was crucified. While he was yet alive Jesus had, on different occasions, openly declared that he would raise his Body to life again on the third day. "I lay down my life," he said to his disciples, "that I may take it again" (John x. 17). And again, "The Son of Man shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon. And after they have scourged him, they will put him to death, and *the third day he shall rise again*" (Luke xviii. 32, 33). And on another occasion, when the Jews asked him for a sign of his Divine mission, he had said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." In these mysterious words he alluded to his future Resurrection, though the Jews, and

even his own disciples, thought at the time that he spoke of the Jewish temple or church, in which the solemn sacrifices were offered. "But he spoke," as the Holy Scripture adds, "of the temple of his Body" (John ii. 19, 21).

The time was now come when our B. Lord was to accomplish these prophecies, and prove to the world by a wonderful miracle, which was far beyond the power of mortal man, that he was, what he had declared himself to be, truly the Son of God. That no doubt, however, might possibly remain in the minds of men as to the reality of his Death and the truth of his Resurrection, he would first be laid in the tomb after the manner of other men when they are dead, and remain there for three days. Accordingly, when it was known that our Lord had expired upon the cross, a certain just or holy man named Joseph, a native of the city of Arimathea, who had all along been a disciple of Christ, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, went in boldly to Pilate, and begged that the Body of Jesus might be given up to him for burial. Pilate having consented, Joseph went along with Nicodemus, who was also, secretly, a disciple of our Lord, to the hill of Calvary, where they found our B. Lady, still transfixed with grief, at the foot of the cross, on which hung the lifeless Body of her Divine Son. With respectful tenderness the two holy men unfastened the nails which secured the Hands and Feet to the wood of the cross, and, taking down the Sacred Body of Jesus from the altar of its sacrifice, laid it in the arms of his afflicted Mother. Mary, with a heart full of anguish, but with heroic fortitude, prepared it for burial, wrapping it up with rich spices in clean linen cloths, according to the custom of the Jews. She then, with the assistance of Joseph and Nicodemus, laid it in the tomb which was close at hand, "a new sepulchre," as the Scripture says, "hewed," or cut, "out of a rock, wherein no man had yet been laid" (John xix. 41; Mark xiv. 46). This tomb or sepulchre, therefore, was not a grave dug out of the earth, such as *we* bury in, but a little cave or room cut in the side of the rock, as was usual among the Jews.



Now, it was well known among the Jews that Jesus had prophesied, when alive, that he would rise again from the dead on the third day. The chief priests and Pharisees went, therefore, to Pilate, and begged of him to set a guard of soldiers over the tomb, lest, as they said, his disciples should come and steal away his body during the night, and then say that he had risen again. Pilate told them that they might set a guard there themselves, if they pleased; and they accordingly appointed soldiers to keep watch, and they put a seal on the stone which was rolled to the mouth of the tomb, so as to be able to tell whether any one had entered (Matt. xxvii. 62, &c.). By taking these precautions, they became in the hands of God witnesses of the truth of our Lord's Resurrection. At the first dawn of morning on Easter Sunday, there came a great earthquake, and, behold, an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, rolled back the stone and sat upon it. "His countenance," as the Scripture says, "was as lightning, and his raiment as snow; and for fear of him the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men" (Matt. xxviii. 3, 4). Meanwhile, the B. Soul of Jesus, which, as you have seen, had gone down to Limbo to carry consolation to the poor souls there detained, returned to his Sacred Body; and his Body, thus restored to life by the presence of the Soul, cast aside the linen cloths in which it was bound, and put on a robe of majesty and splendour, like to that which dazzled the eyes of the Apostles when they beheld our Lord on Mount Thabor. Then did our Saviour rise from the tomb, in sight of the astonished guards, glorious and immortal, showing us, my dear children, that he had gained the victory over death, and giving us a pledge that we shall one day rise with him in glory, if we keep His Divine commandments. He has also, in his Resurrection, given us a striking proof that he is truly God as well as man; for if he died on the cross as man, he raised himself from the dead by his Almighty Power as God.

Q. On what day did Christ rise again from the dead?

A. Christ rose again from the dead on Easter Sunday.

It was on *Easter Sunday* morning that the glorious Resurrection of our Lord took place, and Easter, therefore, is a day of triumph, and the most solemn festival in the whole year. The Jews kept Easter sacred to commemorate their deliverance from the slavery of the Egyptians; but we, with much more reason, keep it sacred to commemorate our deliverance from the slavery of the devil. The Jewish festival was a figure of ours, and their deliverance from earthly bondage was a figure of our greater deliverance from a spiritual slavery, the slavery of sin and the devil.

Sometimes you hear Easter called the Pasch, and the time between Easter and Whitsuntide is usually called the Paschal time. The word Pasch, or Passover, is the old Jewish name given by the command of God to this festival. You remember that on the night before the Israelites escaped from Egypt, they were ordered by God to sacrifice a lamb in each family, and to sprinkle the doorposts of their houses with its blood. In the dead of the night a destroying angel was sent by God to slay the first-born of the Egyptians, but he *passed over* the houses of the Israelites, and entered nowhere where he beheld the blood of the lamb. Hence, the festival observed in memory of this event was called the Pasch or *Passing over* of the angel, and the lamb which was sacrificed was called the Paschal lamb. This lamb was a beautiful figure of our B. Lord, whose Precious Blood was shed on the cross for our salvation, and is sprinkled on our souls in the Holy Sacraments. It is by the shedding of this Sacred Blood that we were set free from the slavery of the devil; neither has that great destroying angel any power to hurt or harm our souls, if he sees upon them the Blood of the Lamb of God.

You know, my dear children, that after our Lord had risen from the dead, he showed himself to his disciples many times during the forty days that he remained on earth before his Ascension into heaven. No doubt his first visit was to his B. Mother, though it is not related in the Scripture. The first that we have an account of was to St. Mary Magdalen, who had been a public sinner, but was now a sincere penitent. The history of this appar-

tion is so beautiful, that I will tell it to you as we find it related by St. John.

#### APPARITION OF JESUS TO ST. MARY MAGDALEN.

"On the first day of the week Mary Magdalen cometh early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre; and she saw the stone taken away from the sepulchre. She ran, therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith to them: *They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.*

"Peter, therefore, went out, and that other disciple, and they came to the sepulchre. And they both ran together, and that other disciple did out-run Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And when he stooped down, he saw the linen cloths lying, but yet he went not in. Then cometh Simon Peter, following him, and went into the sepulchre, and saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin that had been about his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but apart, wrapt up into one place. Then that other disciple also went in, who came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed. The disciples, therefore, departed again to their home.

"But Mary stood at the sepulchre without, weeping. Now as she was weeping, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been laid. They say to her, *Woman, why weepest thou?* She saith to them, *Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.* When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and she knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith to her, *Woman, why weepest thou?* She, thinking that it was the gardener, saith to him, *Sir, if thou hast taken him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.* Jesus saith to her, *Mary.* She turning, saith to him, *Rabboni*, which is to say Master. Jesus saith to her, *Do not touch me, for I am not yet ascended to my Father, but go to my brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God.'* Mary Magdalen cometh, and telleth the disciples, *I have seen the Lord, and these things he said to me*" (John xx.).

#### INCREDULITY OF ST. THOMAS.

"When it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut where the disciples were gathered together, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, *Peace be to you.* And when he had said this, he showed them his Hands and his Side. The disciples, therefore, were glad when they saw the Lord. He said, therefore, to them again, *Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you.* When he had said this, he breathed on them, and he said to them, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost;*

*whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.*

"Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, *We have seen the Lord.* But he said to them, *Except I shall see in his Hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his Side, I will not believe.*

"And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, *Peace be to you.* Then he saith to Thomas, *Put in thy finger hither, and see my Hands and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my Side, and be not faithless, but believing.* Thomas answered and said to him, *My Lord and my God.* Jesus saith to him, *Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed. Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed*" (John xx.).

Q. What is the sixth article of the Creed ?

A. The sixth article of the Creed is, "He ascended into Heaven ; sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty."

Q. What do you mean by the words, "He ascended into Heaven" ?

A. By the words, "He ascended into Heaven," I mean that our Saviour went up Body and Soul into Heaven on Ascension Day, forty days after his Resurrection.

After our B. Lord had risen from the dead upon Easter Sunday, he remained on earth for forty days in order to prove to his disciples the truth of his Resurrection, and to complete the great work of the establishment of his Church. Already, as you know, he had chosen out of those who came to listen to his Divine teaching, twelve favoured disciples, who are called Apostles. These twelve he had carefully instructed, and, at his last supper, had ordained them priests, that, after he should have ascended into Heaven, they might teach to others what he had taught to them, offer the Holy Sacrifice of his Body and Blood, and administer the Sacraments which he had instituted. But he had not as yet actually sent them on their mission, and there were many powers which he had promised, but which he had not as yet given them. For example, he had promised to make St. Peter the visible head of his Church, but, being himself still visibly present with his disciples, he had not as yet done so. Again, he had promised to give his Apostles power to forgive sins, but as he himself was still on earth for sinners to have recourse to, he had not as yet bestowed this power upon

them. All this he did during the forty days that he remained upon earth after his Resurrection and before his Ascension into Heaven. During this time he frequently appeared to his disciples, told them what to do when he should have gone visibly from among them, and gave them the powers which he had promised.

At length the great day arrived on which our B. Redeemer was to complete his labours upon earth, and enter in glory and triumph into possession of his heavenly kingdom. Having given his last instructions to his Apostles, he led them forth to Mount Olivet, near to the village of Bethania. This little village, the abode of Martha and Mary, had often been the resting-place of Jesus after the labours of his public preaching in the neighbouring city of Jerusalem, from which Bethania is about two miles distant. Near to the same spot, and situated likewise at the foot of Mount Olivet, was the village of Gethsemani and the Garden of Olives, where our Lord had, a few weeks before, suffered his cruel agony, and been betrayed by Judas into the hands of his enemies. The same place was now to be the scene of his most glorious triumph. Having reached the summit of the Mount with his twelve Apostles, he gently raised himself from the ground, and lifting up his hands gave them his last parting blessing. Then by the same Almighty power by which he had burst the bonds of death and risen from the tomb, he rose from the earth and ascended to the heavens, until at length a bright cloud hid him from the eyes of his wondering disciples. Thousands of angels, no doubt, accompanied him with joyful canticles on this his glorious entrance into his heavenly kingdom, along with those happy souls, the first-fruits of his victory over hell, whom he had brought from Limbo to share his triumph. And tens of thousands of the heavenly host went forth to meet him, and conduct him with songs of triumph and joyous welcome to the glorious throne, prepared for him, as man, at the right hand of his Eternal Father.

Meanwhile the Apostles had followed the ascending form of their Divine Master, as long as they were able, with astonished eyes, but with hearts full of sadness.

And still they stood gazing at that bright cloud which hid from their eyes one whom they had loved and revered so well, but the value of whose Divine Presence they only now seemed fully to understand, when it had departed from them. Our B. Lord, however, was not unmindful of the children he had left behind, for, as the Holy Scripture relates, "while they were beholding him going up to heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments, who also said, *Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking up to heaven? This Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen him going into heaven*" (Acts i. ; Luke xxiv.).

At these words the Apostles were comforted, and, recalling to mind the command which Jesus had given them, to return to Jerusalem after he should have left them, and await there the coming of the Holy Spirit, they left the hill of Olivet, and re-entered the holy city. Here they retired into an upper room in the house of one of the disciples, and remained there occupied in prayer and meditation, going out only to assist at the services of the temple, until the solemn feast of Pentecost.

From this beautiful history of our B. Lord's Ascension, we must learn, my dear children, not to set our hearts on the things of this world, but on heaven, which is our true country, where Jesus Christ has gone to prepare a place for us. "In my Father's house," said he to his sorrowful disciples, on the night of his last supper, "there are many mansions. And if I shall go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will take you to myself, that where I am, you also may be" (John xiv. 2, 3). Our B. Lord, in rising from the dead, has given us a pledge that we also shall rise from the grave, at the last day, with bodies glorious and resplendent, if, while on earth, we keep his Divine commandments; but, in ascending into heaven, he has given us a further pledge that we shall, at the last day of general judgment, ascend with him to the kingdom of his glory, if we are then found in the number of his elect.

It is related by the holy Fathers that our B. Saviour left imprinted on Mount Olivet, at the spot from which he

ascended into heaven, the traces of his sacred footsteps. St. Augustine, who lived about four hundred years after Christ, declares that they were there in his day, and St. Paulinus adds, that the spot could never be covered with any pavement, though this had often been attempted, and that no violence had ever been able to efface them. These precious relics of our dear Redeemer have, in all ages, been visited by the faithful with the greatest veneration. St. Bernardine tells us that one of these holy pilgrims, who had visited in succession all the places consecrated by the presence of the Son of God upon earth, from Bethlehem to Calvary, on arriving at Mount Olivet and beholding the last traces of his beloved Redeemer, was so overcome by the longing desire of being united to him in heaven that, while he lay prostrate on the ground, kissing with the tenderest love the sacred footsteps, his soul burst asunder the ties of the body, and took her flight from Mount Olivet to the embraces of him whom she had so faithfully loved and so ardently desired.\*

Q. What do you mean by the words "sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty"?

A. By the words "sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty," I do not mean that God the Father has hands, for he is a pure Spirit: but I mean that Christ, as God, is equal to the Father; and, as Man, is in the highest place in heaven.

God the Father has no hands, my dear children, because he has no body, but is a pure Spirit. God the Son has a body, because he took a human body like ours, that he might suffer and die for us; but neither God the Father, nor God the Holy Ghost have any body. Why, then, do we say that Jesus Christ is seated at his Heavenly Father's *right hand*? Because this is only another way of saying that *Christ, as Man, is in the highest place in heaven*, next in dignity and glory to God himself. As *God*, of course, Jesus Christ holds the same place as his Father, for he is equal to him and to the Holy Ghost in all things; but, *as Man*, he has only the second place, because man is always less than God. Man is always the creature of God; and even our B. Lord's human Body

\* See Butler's "Feasts and Fasts."

and Soul were made by God. But because his Sacred Body and Soul were closely united in one Person with his Divinity or Godhead, therefore they are worthy to be adored as God, and are infinitely above all other creatures. Hence in his ever-blessed human nature he is raised in heaven far above all the Saints and angels, and holds the highest place next to God, or as we say in the Apostles' Creed, *sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty*. For you know that the highest honour which a king or an emperor can show to any one, is to set him at his right hand. If the queen, for example, were to make a great feast, and wished to show particular honour to one of the guests whom she had invited, she would say to him, "Come and sit at my right hand." In like manner Almighty God, as the prophet David tells us, said to his Divine Son, *as man*, on the day of his Ascension into heaven, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool" (Ps. cix. 1). And again, St. Paul says, "To which of the angels said he at any time, *Sit on my right hand?*" (Heb. i. 13.)

#### ST. STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR.

St. Stephen, the first of that glorious army of martyrs who soon began to follow in the footsteps of our crucified Lord, was one of the seven deacons who were ordained by the Apostles to assist them in the instruction of the new converts and the public distribution of alms. This holy man, as the Scripture tells us, was so full of the Spirit of God, that he worked many signs and wonders among the people, and spoke with such wisdom and eloquence that his adversaries were reduced to silence. They accordingly bribed false witnesses to accuse him of having blasphemed God, and St. Stephen was dragged before the High Priest and the supreme council, or Sanhedrim, to answer to this false charge. Here he spoke with such wisdom and authority that his accusers "were cut to the heart, and gnashed their teeth" with rage and envy; but Stephen, "being full of the Holy Ghost, looking up steadfastly to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And he said, *Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.*"

"And they, crying out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and with one accord ran violently upon him. And, casting him forth without the city, they stoned him; and the witnesses laid their garments at the feet of a young man, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, invoking and saying, *Lord Jesus, receive my*



*spirit.* And, falling on his knees, he cried with a loud voice, saying, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.* And when he had said this, he fell asleep in the Lord" (Acts vi. vii.).

#### ST. FELICITAS AND HER SEVEN SONS.

During the reign of the Emperor Antoninus, a noble Roman lady, named Felicitas, was brought before Publius, the prefect or governor of Rome, along with her seven sons, on a charge of practising the Christian religion. Publius, desirous of gaining over the children by means of the mother, took her aside, and earnestly entreated her to have pity on her children, and, by prevailing on them to offer sacrifice to idols, to save their lives and secure for them the favour and rewards of the Emperor. But the holy mother nobly answered, "Do not think to frighten me by threats, or to win me by fair speeches. The compassion you exhort me to would make me the most cruel of mothers. My children will live eternally with Christ if they are faithful to him, but must expect eternal death if they sacrifice to idols." Then, turning to her children, she said to them, "My sons, look up to heaven, where Jesus Christ with his Saints expects you. Be faithful in his love, and fight courageously for your souls."

The prefect, enraged, ordered her to be cruelly beaten, and then, calling her children before him, strove to induce them, both by threats and promises, to adore the false gods. The sons answered, with a spirit worthy of their mother, that they would never forsake Jesus Christ, and that they did not fear a passing death, but everlasting torments. The Emperor, being informed of their constancy, condemned each of them to a cruel death. The eldest was scourged to death with leaden plummets. The next two were beaten with clubs till they expired. The fourth was thrown headlong from a precipice. The three youngest, with the heroic mother, were beheaded.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

In trials, afflictions, sufferings, and death itself, let us encourage ourselves by saying, in the words of St. Felicitas, "Look up to heaven, my soul; there Jesus Christ with his Saints awaits you." Or let us say, with her sons, "I do not fear passing sufferings, but eternal torments."

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## NINTH INSTRUCTION.

*Seventh Article — Jesus Christ — The General and Particular Judgments.*

Q. What is the seventh article of the Creed?

A. The seventh article of the Creed is—"From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead."

The two Angels who were sent by our B. Lord, on the day of his Ascension, to console his afflicted Apostles, while yet they stood gazing on the heavens where he had disappeared from their sight, comforted them with these words: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking up to heaven? This Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen him going into heaven" (Acts i. 11). It is of the coming of our B. Lord to judge mankind that the Angels spoke, and it is in this that we declare our belief when we say, in the seventh article of the Apostles' Creed, *From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.*

Sometimes you will hear speak of the first and second coming of the Son of God. His first coming was when he came into the world as a little babe, and was born in the stable at Bethlehem. His coming then was in the midst of poverty, suffering, and neglect. But his second coming, which will be at the end of the world, to judge mankind, will be in power, majesty, and glory. For the Father, as Jesus said to his disciples, "hath given all judgment to the Son, that all men may honour the Son as they honour the Father" (John v. 22, 23). Here our B. Lord speaks of himself in his human nature, that is, as man. For, *as God*, he has a right to judge his own creatures, but *as man*, he receives that right from his Heavenly Father.

Our B. Lord, therefore, will come to judge us all at the end of the world, but he will also judge each of us at the moment of our death. For there are two judgments, the first or *particular* judgment, which will take place when we die, and in which we shall each be judged separately, and the second or *general* judgment, which will take place

at the end of the world in the general assembly of all mankind. You will perhaps wonder why there are two judgments. Is it that the sentence passed upon us when we die will ever be changed or recalled? No, my dear children; but it is fitting that our bodies, which were then dead, but which will have risen again at the last day, should appear along with our souls at the judgment seat of God, to receive the reward or punishment of those good or evil deeds in which they have been their partners during life. Besides, it is for the glory of God that the sentence passed on each one should then be made known to all mankind. It often happens in this life that the good are poor, persecuted, and despised, while the wicked are rich, prosperous, and held in honour and esteem by the world. Thus, if we looked no further than the present life, it might seem to some, who do not bear in mind that the peace of a good conscience and the happiness of a virtuous life are far beyond all worldly advantages, as if the wicked, rather than the good, are the favourites of Heaven. But on the day of general judgment the Justice of God will be made manifest to every one. It will then be seen that the short sufferings of this life, borne with patience for the love of God, have secured for the good an eternity of happiness; while the false pleasures and sinful enjoyments of the wicked are the cause of their eternal damnation. Hence the Holy Scripture describes the wicked as saying at the last day, when they behold the glory of the just, "These are they whom we had some time in derision and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their lives madness and their end without honour. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the Saints" (Wisd. v. 3-5). Finally, and more than all, the Justice of God requires that his Divine Son himself, so despised, and suffering, and abject among men, should, on the day of general judgment, be glorified in the sight of his enemies, and exalted by his Heavenly Father in proportion to his sufferings and ignominies. Hence, he said to the High Priest Caiaphas, when he sought to condemn him to death, "Hereafter you shall see the Son of Man

sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. xxvi. 64).

As it is of the last or general judgment that the catechism first speaks, I will now ask you what we are to believe concerning it.

Q. Will Christ ever come again?

A. Christ will come again from heaven at the last day, to judge all mankind.

Our B. Lord *will come again from heaven at the last day to judge all mankind.* Every one who has ever been born will have, on that terrible day, to stand before God to receive his last and final sentence, both the *living*, that is to say, those who are alive on the earth at the day of judgment, and the *dead*, that is, all those who have died since the beginning of the world.\* But when will the last day be? We know not; God only knows. Our B. Lord, when he was asked this question by his Apostles, would not tell them, for he said that it belongs to God alone to know the day and the hour. Almighty God has wisely left us in ignorance of it, as he has also of the moment of our death, in order that we may be always prepared for it. But he has told us by the lips of his Divine Son that there will be terrible signs before that day comes, to warn us of its approach. First of all, there will be earthquakes, and wars, and famines, and pestilences, which will fill the whole earth with desolation, and be a warning to sinners that the day of their final punishment is at hand. But for all that, men will go on in their sins, as our Lord says, just as they did before the deluge, when they were eating, and drinking, and marrying, and giving in marriage, without giving a thought to God or their souls, up to the very day when Noah entered into the ark. Then the floodgates of heaven were opened, mighty torrents of rain fell over the earth, the sea rose, and the water swept over the highest mountains, swallowing up all the

\* The living and the dead may also be understood to mean those who are living the life of grace or who are dead by being in mortal sin. In instructing young children, it might cause confusion to unfold a second sense.

wicked sinners who had despised the warnings of God. So shall it be at the end of the world. While all are sleeping in false security, the fatal day will at length arrive. The sun shall be darkened, the moon refuse her light, and the stars fall down from heaven. The sign of the Son of Man, that is to say, the Cross of Jesus Christ, shall then appear shining in the heavens, and he himself, in the midst of glory and majesty, shall be seen coming in the clouds, attended by his angels, to judge mankind. The prophet Joel tells us that this last terrible scene will take place in the valley of Josaphat (Joel iii. 12), which lies between Jerusalem and Mount Olivet, within sight of the garden of Gethsemani, the court of Pilate, and the hill of Calvary. Thus will our Lord be exalted where he has been most humbled, and all sinners will be confounded when they behold before their eyes the very place where he, who is about to judge them, died to save them.

Jesus Christ, being now seated on his judgment throne, will send forth his angels with a trumpet and a great voice to summon all mankind from the four quarters of the globe to come and receive their sentence. At the sound of this terrible trumpet, the dead shall arise from their graves, and their bodies being again united with their souls, they shall be gathered together before God to give a strict account of their whole lives and receive their final doom. (See Matt. xxiv. ; Luke xvii.)

Q. What are the things Christ will judge ?

A. Christ will judge our thoughts, words, works, and omissions.

Yes, all *our thoughts, words, works*, and even our sins of *omission*, will then be brought to light, and of each we shall have to give a strict account. So that, you see, you will have to be judged not only for what you have *done*, but also for what you have *said* or *thought* about, and even for those things which you ought to have performed, but which you have left undone. How many hundred words do you not speak in the day, and how many thousand thoughts pass through your mind ! When you get up in the morning, you have forgotten the greater part of what you have said or thought about the day

before, and even a good deal of what you did ; but God has not forgotten any of it, and at the last day he will make it all known, and give you a reward or punishment for each thought, word, and act, according as it has been good or bad. He will also judge you in regard to every duty which you have neglected, every grace which you have abused, every opportunity which he has given you, but which, through carelessness or sloth, you have failed to turn to good account. "I saw," says St. John, "the dead, great and small, standing in the presence of the throne, and the books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life ; and the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the pool of fire" (Apoc. xx. 12, 15). See, then, what care we should take to please Almighty God each day, and every moment of the day, since every day, and all the day through, we are working for eternity.

Our B. Lord having called each one to a strict account for every thought, word, and work, and having made known to the whole assembled multitude the sins of the wicked, to their great shame and confusion, and the good deeds of the just, to their great joy and consolation, will proceed to pronounce the final sentence. But what will that sentence be? It is already written in the Holy Gospel. Our B. Saviour told it to the Apostles on that day when they came to him as he was sitting on Mount Olivet, and put to him questions about the end of the world. Tell me, then,

Q. What will he say to the wicked?

A. He will say to the wicked, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41).

This, my dear children, is the awful sentence which Jesus Christ himself has told us that he will pronounce, at the last day, upon the wicked: *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels.* Oh, how the wicked will tremble

and wither away through fear, and be consumed with rage and despair, when they hear these terrible words pronounced by the lips of a God who never changes his decrees ! “ *Depart*,” he will say to them, that is, “ Begone, get away out of my sight, for you are not worthy to behold the glory and majesty of God, nor the joys that I have prepared for those who love me. Depart, then ; separate yourselves from the good, and separate yourselves *from me* ; but, before you go, take my curse upon you ; yes, the curse of an angry God, whom you have outraged, insulted, and blasphemed ; a curse, which is no sooner spoken than it is executed ; a curse, which covers you with every evil and deprives you of every good. Depart from me, *you cursed*.” But whither ? “ *Into everlasting fire* ; into that pit of torments *prepared for the devil and his angels*, where there is eternal ‘ weeping and gnashing of teeth ’ (Matt. xxv. 30) ; ‘ where their worm dieth not and the fire is not extinguished ’ ” (Mark ix. 43). No sooner shall these terrible words have been spoken, than the devils will seize upon the damned as their lawful prey, and drag them down, amid shrieks of despair, into the eternal fire of hell.

Q. What will he say to the just ?

A. He will say to the just, “ Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom which is prepared for you ” (Matt. xxv. 34).

If the sentence of the wicked is very terrible, how sweet and consoling is that of the good ! *Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom which is prepared for you*. How their hearts will beat for joy when they hear those sweet words from the lips of our B. Lord ! As much as to say, “ Come, my beloved, your troubles are now over ; your dangers, your trials, your sufferings, are no more. Come, receive my blessing and that of my Heavenly Father, and take possession of that happy kingdom of glory which has been prepared for you from the beginning of the world, and which, when you had lost it by sin, I purchased for you again by my sufferings and death.” Oh, my dear children, how happy will you be if you one day hear that beautiful sentence from the lips of Jesus

Christ ! How little will you then think all that you have done and suffered for God in this world, compared with the joy and delight of that moment ! But if you wish to hear these consoling words, you must lead good lives. You must shun sin and bad company, keep God's commandments, and perform faithfully all your duties. You must live *for* God, in this world, by always trying to please him, if you would live *with* him for ever in heaven

#### THE LAST JUDGMENT.

"When the Son of Man shall come in his majesty and all the Angels with him, then shall he sit upon the seat of his majesty. And all nations shall be gathered together before him ; and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left.

"Then shall the king say to them that shall be on his right hand, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me to eat ; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink ; I was a stranger and you took me in, naked and you covered me, sick and you visited me ; I was in prison and you came to me.* Then shall the just answer him saying, *Lord, when did we see thee hungry and fed thee, thirsty and gave thee drink ? And when did we see thee a stranger and took thee in, or naked and covered thee ? Or when did we see thee sick or in prison and came to thee ?* And the king answering, shall say to them, *Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me.*

"Then shall he say to them also that shall be on his left hand, *Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me not to eat ; I was thirsty and you gave me not to drink ; I was a stranger and you took me not in, naked and you covered me not, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.* Then they also shall answer him, saying, *Lord, when did we see thee hungry or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to thee ?* Then he shall answer them, saying, *Amen I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to me.*

"And these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting" (Matt. xxv. 31, &c.).

The thought of the last judgment is one which is well calculated to make a serious impression on our hearts and keep us from committing sin. We even read in the history of the Church, that a picture of that terrible scene



was the immediate cause of the conversion of a great nation. I will tell you how this took place.

#### CONVERSION OF THE BULGARIANS.

The Bulgarians, a people dwelling on the banks of the Danube, remained till the ninth century buried in idolatry. About that time it happened that the sister of the King, Boigoris, was taken prisoner by the Emperor of Constantinople, and during her captivity was converted to the Christian faith. On her return to her own country she tried to convince her brother of the folly of idolatry and the beauty and excellence of the Christian religion; but Boigoris, though he admitted the truth of all she said, remained obstinate in the worship of his false gods.

Now it happened that the King, who was engaged in decorating his palace, sent to Constantinople for an artist, hoping to obtain from thence one of greater merit than could be found in his own country. The Emperor sent him a monk, named Methodius, who was remarkable for his skill in painting. Boigoris immediately set him to work, bidding him paint on the walls of the gallery some picture of so terrible a nature that it should strike fear into all who beheld it. The good monk promised to do so, and, while he was at work, caused a curtain to be extended before that portion of the wall which he was decorating, so that the picture might not be seen by any one until it was completed.

When the work was finished, and the day arrived for removing the curtain, the King and all his court assembled to witness the result. The curtain was withdrawn, and the King beheld before his eyes a faithful representation of the last judgment; for Methodius, thinking no scene so terrible as this, had chosen it for his subject. He had represented in lively colours kings, princes, and people standing before the throne of the Great Judge, who appeared armed with all the terrors of Majesty and Justice, and attended by ministering angels. Other angels were represented as separating the good from the bad, and placing some on the right and some on the left hand of Almighty God.

The King was struck with terror at the sight, and listened eagerly while the holy monk explained to him the different portions of the picture, exhorting him at the same time to take such steps now as would secure for himself a place among the Saints of God when that great day should at length arrive.

The instructions of Methodius, assisted by the grace of God, were not without effect. Boigoris was shortly after baptized, and his conversion was soon followed by that of the whole nation.—*Buller's Saints' Lives.*

Q. Will not every one be judged at their death, as well as at the last day?

A. Yes; "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this, the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27).

So far, my dear children, we have been speaking of the *general* judgment of all mankind, which will take place at the end of the world. But there is another judgment, which will take place immediately after our death, when each one will be judged separately, and this is called the *particular* judgment. For, as St. Paul says, *It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this, the judgment.* No sooner, then, shall we have breathed our last, and the soul gone out of the body, than at that very moment our B. Lord will come to judge us in the place where we have expired, and will pass upon us that sentence which he will afterwards confirm at the end of the world. The devil will be there to accuse us, and our Guardian Angel to plead for us ; but, alas ! he will be obliged to bear witness against us, if we have neglected his warnings and slighted his counsels. In that day, our Lord will judge us with strict justice ; there will be no more room for mercy or repentance. As we are found then, so will our sentence be for all eternity, for the Holy Scripture says, that as the tree falls, so shall it lie (Eccles. xi. 3). But what will that sentence be ? It will be one of three things,—heaven, hell, or purgatory. If our souls are found perfectly pure and free from sin, they will pass at once to the enjoyment of God in heaven ; but our bodies will, as you know, remain in the grave until the day of general resurrection. If we are found in mortal sin, we shall be condemned at once to the eternal torments of hell. But if our souls are stained with lesser sins, or if we have not done sufficient penance for the greater sins of which we have already repented, and for which we have received pardon from God, our B. Lord will sentence us for a longer or a shorter time to purgatory, that our souls, being there purified from all sin, may be able to pass into that happy kingdom of bliss, into which the Holy Scripture tells us that nothing defiled can ever enter (Apoc. xxi. 27).

#### ST. SIMEON AND THE EUNUCH.

During the cruel persecution raised by Sapor II. against the Christian religion, the venerable St. Simeon, Bishop of Ctesiphon,

was apprehended, and brought before the King on a charge of refusing to join in the idolatrous worship of the sun, which in Persia is worshipped as a god. Sapor, having in vain endeavoured by threats and promises to shake his constancy, remanded him to prison. As the holy martyr was led from the royal presence under a guard of soldiers, he saw, sitting at the gate of the palace, a eunuch, named Usthazanes, who was a special friend and favourite of the King, having had the care of his early training and education. This nobleman had formerly been a Christian, and was still indeed the same at heart, though, to preserve the favour of his royal master, he had consented to adore the sun. Seeing the holy Bishop led past, Usthazanes, who respected him greatly, rose from his seat, and prostrated himself before him, according to the manner of the Persians. St. Simeon, however, knowing that he had been guilty of an outward act of idolatry, gave him a sharp reproof, and turned away his head from him. This seasonable severity touched Usthazanes to the quick, and caused him to enter seriously into himself. "Alas," said he, bursting into tears, "if Simeon's rebuke be so grievous, how shall I be able to bear the anger of God, whom I have so basely denied!" Whereupon, hastening home, he threw off his rich garments, and put on a black robe in sign of mourning. Then, returning to the palace gate, he resumed his seat with every appearance of deep affliction. The King, being informed of it, sent to inquire why he mourned, when his sovereign enjoyed his crown and health. He answered that it was for a double fault, for adoring the creature instead of the Creator, and for imposing on the King by an act of worship performed against his own conscience. Sapor, in a rage, condemned him to death, and Usthazanes was accordingly led to execution, begging as a last favour, in order to repair the scandal of his previous fall, that the crime for which he suffered, namely, that of being a Christian, might be proclaimed before him. Arrived at the place of execution, his head was struck from his body, and thus the shame and guilt of his fall were blotted out by the glory of his martyrdom.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

#### THE INDIAN CACIQUE.

Soon after the discovery and invasion of North America by the Spaniards, an Indian chieftain or Cacique was brought before the Spanish Governor, charged with conspiracy and attempt to revolt. The Governor sat in his chair of state, surrounded by his officers, and with his naked sword suspended from his belt. The poor Indian stood before him unarmed, half naked, and loaded with fetters. When the charge had been read, the Governor, turning to the Cacique, asked him what he had to say in his defence. The poor Indian, having in vain protested his innocence, at length advancing to the Governor's feet, and taking hold, with his fettered hand, of the glittering steel, said, in tones of true sincerity, "Judge for yourself, Governor, whether it is likely that I should be so mad as to revolt against one who bears a weapon like this."

This simple answer of the Indian chieftain should put a useful reflection into our minds when tempted by Satan to mortal sin. "Begone!" we should say to him; "how can I be so mad as to revolt against a God who bears such weapons as those of Infinite Justice and Almighty Power?"

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## TENTH INSTRUCTION.

*Eighth Article — The Holy Ghost — His Name — His Divine Nature — His Procession from the Father and the Son — His Descent on the Apostles.*

Q. What is the eighth article of the Creed?

A. The eighth article of the Creed is, "I believe in the Holy Ghost."

So far, my dear children, all our instructions on the Creed have been about the first two Persons of the B. Trinity, God the Father and God the Son. We come now, in the eighth article, to speak of the third Person, God the Holy Ghost; *I believe in the Holy Ghost.*

It happens very commonly, I am afraid, that we do not think sufficiently about God the Holy Ghost, and how much we owe to this Divine Spirit, who is the author of all the good that takes place in our souls. We are something like those Jews whom St. Paul found at Ephesus, who called themselves disciples of Christ, but, when he asked them, "Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" answered, "We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost" (Acts xix.). When St. Paul came to question them, he found that they had only been baptized in the baptism of St. John the Baptist, and that they had never been fully instructed in the doctrine of Jesus Christ. You will perhaps say that *you* are not so ignorant as not to know that there is a Holy Ghost; and, indeed, it would be a shame if you were, since you have received the Baptism, not of St. John, but of Jesus Christ, and been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. But still there are

many things, I daresay, which you ought to know about the Holy Ghost, but which you do not ; for example, you do not know, perhaps, of all his Goodness to you, or thank or love him as he deserves. Listen, then, and we will try to learn from this article what the Church teaches us about the Holy Ghost, and about all that he does for our souls.

First of all, you would, no doubt, like to know why it is that we call the third Person of the B. Trinity by the name of the *Holy Ghost*. You know why he is called *Holy*, for he is God, and God is Holiness itself. But why is he called the *Holy Ghost*? What is the meaning of the word *Ghost*? It is an old English word, meaning a spirit ; so, when you speak of a ghost story, you mean the story of some one whose spirit has appeared after death, as that of the prophet Samuel did to the witch of Endor. Thus, you see, that the words *Holy Ghost* only mean Holy Spirit ; so that we may use either one or the other name, just as we please, when we speak of the third Person of the B. Trinity.

You will wonder, perhaps, why we do not give the same name to the first and second Persons of the B. Trinity, each of whom, being God, is infinitely Holy, and likewise a pure spirit ; so that each of them might, with truth, be called the Holy Spirit or the Holy Ghost. The simple reason is this : both the first and second Persons have a name of their own, the one being the Father and the other the Son of God ; but the third Person, being neither Father nor Son, is called by that name which belongs to him by his nature as God, namely, the Holy Ghost or the Holy Spirit, and so he is usually called in the Sacred Scriptures.

But there is another reason why it is most fitting that the third Person of the B. Trinity should be especially called by the name of the *Holy Spirit*. It is because it is he who makes our souls or spirits holy by his grace. It is true that he does not do this separately or apart from the Father and the Son, for God is one, and all the three Persons of the B. Trinity do conjointly what each one is said to do ; for example, in creating, redeeming, and giv-

ing grace to man. But what we mean is this, that, as the creation of the world, which is a work of Power, is ascribed to God the Father, though, in fact, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost created the world along with him,—and as the Redemption of man, which is a wonderful work of Divine Wisdom, is ascribed to God the Son, though the Father and the Holy Ghost co-operated in his becoming man and redeeming us,—so, in like manner, is our Sanctification, or the making our souls holy, ascribed in particular to the Holy Ghost, though the grace of God comes to us, through him, from all the three Persons of the B. Trinity. Thus St. Paul says in one of his epistles, “The charity,” that is, the love, “of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us” (Rom. v. 5). And you, in one of the beautiful hymns of the Holy Ghost, sing—

Holy Ghost, come down upon thy children ;  
*Give us grace and make us thine ;*  
 Thy tender fires within us kindle,  
 Blessed Spirit, Dove Divine.

*For all within us good and holy*  
*Is from thee, thy precious gift.*

Here, you see, the hymn says that everything that is good and holy comes from and is the special gift of the Holy Ghost. Thus, it is the Holy Ghost who, by his grace, cleanses us from our sins, makes us friends of God, and helps us to overcome temptation and to perform good works.

But you will say, perhaps, “Do not these graces come to us from the Passion and Death of our Lord, who died on the cross, that our souls might be raised from the death of sin to the life of Divine grace?” Yes, my dear children, it is quite true that our B. Lord has *merited* these graces for us by his sufferings and Death, which are the source or fountain of all grace, but then he *gives* us them by the Holy Ghost. It was for this reason that, when he was about to leave the world, he consoled his disciples by telling them that he would send them the Holy Ghost ; and he went on to say that it was for their real good

that he should leave them ; for the time fixed for the coming of the Holy Ghost, who should apply his merits to their souls, was not till after his own departure. " It is expedient to you that I go : for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you ; but if I go, I will send him to you " (John xvi. 7).

You also see, from these words of our Lord, that the third Person of the B. Trinity, besides being called the Holy Ghost and the Holy Spirit is sometimes called the *Paraclete*. This word means Advocate, that is to say, one who speaks or pleads for another. This the Holy Ghost does by assisting us in our prayers, for we can make no prayer that is good for anything or pleasing to God without the grace of the Holy Ghost. Therefore St. Paul says, " No man can say the Lord Jesus but by the Holy Ghost " (1 Cor. xii. 3) ; in other words, no man can, unassisted by the Holy Ghost, even pronounce the Holy name of Jesus in a manner that will please God. But, on the contrary, when the Holy Ghost helps us to pray, then our prayers cannot fail to be heard. Wherefore St. Paul says again, " We know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings " (Rom. viii. 26). It is for this reason that he is called our *Paraclete* or Advocate.

You see now how much reason we have to love the Holy Ghost, to thank him for his graces, and to seek his blessing and guidance in all our undertakings. Many good people have the pious practice of saying the prayer of the Holy Ghost, " Come, O Holy Spirit," &c., at the beginning of every important work or employment ; for instance, in Catholic Colleges, the students recite this little prayer whenever they commence their studies. At any rate, we should often pray to the Holy Ghost, for which purpose we might repeat one of the beautiful hymns in his honour, to beg his grace to overcome temptation, keep the commandments, and know and accomplish the Divine Will in all things.

Q. Who is the Holy Ghost ?

A. The Holy Ghost is the third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

*The Holy Ghost is the third Person of the Blessed*

*Trinity*: this is the first thing we have to believe respecting him. Though possessing one and the same Divine nature with the Father and the Son, he is different in Person; in other words, he is not the Father, nor is he the Son, but he is the Spirit of both. How this is, we do not know; it is one of the sublime mysteries of our faith. Before the coming of our Lord, this mystery was not revealed to mankind as perfectly as it is now. But when Jesus Christ came, he instructed his disciples more fully about the Holy Ghost, and taught them that, though one and the same God, he was different in Person from himself and the Father. Hence it was that, at our Lord's baptism, the Holy Spirit descended upon him in the form of a Dove (Matt. iii. 16), showing thereby that he is distinct in Person from the Divine Son, who was baptized, and from the Father, who spoke by a voice from heaven. Again, when our Lord sent his Apostles to preach to the world, he bade them baptize all nations "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19), that is to say, in the name of one God, and three distinct Persons.

Q. From whom doth the Holy Ghost proceed?

A. The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son.

This is the second great truth which the catechism teaches us about the Holy Ghost; *He proceeds from the Father and the Son*. Take notice that we do not say that he is *born or begotten of the Father*, as we do when we speak of the Son of God, but that he *proceeds from both the Father and the Son*. In what mysterious manner this Divine procession takes place, we do not know. All that we know is, that it is a truth which God teaches us, and therefore we submit at once our weak and imperfect reason to the obedience of Divine faith.

Q. Is the Holy Ghost equal to the Father and to the Son?

A. Yes; the Holy Ghost is equal to the Father and the Son, for he is the same Lord and God as they are.

The third truth which we here learn about the Holy Ghost is, that *he is equal in all things to the Father and*



*the Son.* This follows, as a matter of course, from his being the third Person of the B. Trinity, for all the three Divine Persons are perfectly equal to each other in Power, Wisdom, Goodness, and every perfection. Hence the catechism says, *He is the same Lord and God as they are.* Like the Father and the Son, he is the *Lord* or Master of all; and as he possesses, like them, the nature of *God*, he is equally worthy of our adoration, praise, and love.

But perhaps you may think that God the Father and God the Son must have existed before the Holy Ghost, since the Holy Ghost, as you have learnt, proceeds from them. Is this so? No, my dear children, it is not, for there never was a time when the Holy Ghost did not proceed from them. He has proceeded from the Father and the Son from all eternity, in the same way as the Son of God is begotten or born of the Father from all eternity. Neither the Father, the Son, nor the Holy Ghost had any beginning, and therefore it cannot be said that any one of the three Divine Persons is older or younger than the other two.

Q. When did the Holy Ghost come down on the Apostles?

A. The Holy Ghost came down on the Apostles on Whit-Sunday in the form of "parted tongues, as it were, of fire" (Acts ii. 3).

Q. Why did he come down upon the Apostles?

A. The Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles to confirm their faith, to sanctify them, and to enable them to found the Church.

The fourth truth which we are here taught about the Holy Ghost is that he *came down on the Apostles upon Whit-Sunday in the form of parted tongues, as it were, of fire.* This coming of the Holy Ghost had been frequently predicted by our B. Lord. On the night of his Passion, seeing his Apostles plunged in sadness at the thought of his approaching departure, he consoled them by telling them that, as soon as he had returned to his Heavenly Father, he would send upon them the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, who would teach them all truth, and bring all things to their minds whatever he had taught them (John xiv. 26, xv. 26, xvi. 13). This promise he repeated to them after his Resurrection; and when he

was on the point of ascending into heaven, he bade them return to Jerusalem, and remain there until the promise should be fulfilled (Luke xxiv. 49). The Apostles, accordingly, during the ten days following our Lord's Ascensi, assembled together in an upper room in the city of Jerusalem, and remained there, occupied in prayer, along with the B. Virgin and the holy women, awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit. At length, upon the tenth day, the Jewish feast of Pentecost, while they were all assembled, "suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues, as it were, of fire, and it sat upon every one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak" (Acts ii.).

This, my dear children, is the account related in Scripture of the coming down of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles. By this wonderful miracle they were changed in a moment into new men. Before the Holy Ghost descended upon them, they were timid and cowardly, and had all run away from our Lord when he was led to execution. Now, they were brave and courageous, and not afraid of even torture or death in the service of their Divine Master. Before, they were dull and ignorant, and could not understand many of our Lord's instructions; now, they all of a sudden understood the meaning of his words, and, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, became not only perfectly instructed themselves, but able to teach and instruct others. They received also, at the same time, the gift of miracles, that is, the power of healing the sick, raising the dead to life, and doing other wonderful things which man cannot do of his own natural power. They also received the gift of tongues, by which all who heard them speak, of whatever nation they might be, seemed to hear them speak in their own language. Hence we read that the Holy Ghost came down upon them in the form of tongues of fire, to show them no doubt that in preaching to the various nations of the world, they

would be able to speak to their hearers in their respective languages and so enkindle the flame of Divine love in the hearts of all.

But what was the reason why the Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles, bestowing upon them such great interior graces and such extraordinary miraculous gifts? It was, as the catechism says, *to confirm their faith, to sanctify*, or make them holy and pleasing to God, and to enable them to fulfil their great mission of *founding* or establishing the Church of God. They needed the heavenly light and sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit, as we do, to enable them to secure their own salvation, and they needed both these and other special gifts and graces to make them fit instruments to convert the nations of the world. For if they had not been enlightened to know and understand Divine truths, they could not have instructed others; if they had not been made bold and courageous, they durst not have done so; if they had not received the power of working miracles, many would not have believed them; and if they had not had the gift of tongues, a very great number would not have understood them. Thus, you see, God gives us grace, or is ready to give it, if we ask it, in proportion to the need we have of it. Now, as *we* also stand in need of the grace of the Holy Ghost, he has provided for us the Sacrament of Confirmation, in which we may receive this Blessed Spirit. In this Sacrament the Holy Ghost descends into our hearts, as he did into the hearts of the Apostles, to enable us to know, and understand, and firmly hold fast the truths of religion, and to give us grace and courage to profess and practise them. It is true that *we* do not receive the power of working miracles or of speaking in different languages, for these gifts are nowise necessary, nor were they intended for us. They were given to the Apostles, as they have been at times to Saints in later ages, that the strange and idolatrous nations, to whom they had to preach, might be better able to understand and more easily led to believe them.

## PREACHING OF THE APOSTLES.

No sooner had the Holy Ghost filled the souls of the Apostles, than, fired with a holy zeal, they left the upper room, where they had shut themselves up for fear of the Jews, and went out boldly into the streets to preach. "And they began to speak," as the Scripture says, "in divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.

"Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven. And when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded in mind, because that every man heard them speak in his own tongue. And they were all amazed and wondered, saying, *Behold ! are not all these that speak Galileans ? And how have we heard every man our own tongue wherein we were born ? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphilia, Egypt and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews also, and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians ; we have heard them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all astonished and wondered, saying to one another, What meaneth this ? But others, mocking, said, These men are full of new wine.*

"But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke to them : *Ye men of Judea, and all you that dwell in Jerusalem, these are not drunk, as you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel, 'It shall come to pass in the last days, saith the Lord, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh.' Do penance, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are far off whomsoever the Lord shall call*" (Acts ii.).

## COURAGE OF ST. PETER.

The noble courage displayed by the Apostle St. Peter after he had received the Holy Ghost, is a striking example of the grace which the Holy Spirit gives to those who receive him worthily. You remember that, at the time of our B. Lord's Passion, St. Peter had, at the voice of a poor servant-maid, been so struck with terror, that he had thrice denied that he so much as knew his Divine Master. Now, he went boldly out into the streets to preach Christ crucified, and openly reproached the Jews for having put to death their long-expected Redeemer. By his first sermon, St. Peter converted no less than three thousand souls, and by the second as many as five thousand. The chief priests and elders of the people, enraged at his success, called him before them, and forbade him to preach any longer the name of Jesus ; whereupon he, along with St. John, boldly made answer, "If it be just in the sight of God to

hear you rather than God, judge ye. We cannot but speak the things that we have heard and seen." Cast into prison a second time for preaching the gospel, he was this time cruelly scourged, but went away from the judgment-seat with the other Apostles, rejoicing, as the Holy Scripture says, that he was "accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus" (Acts iv., v.).

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## ELEVENTH INSTRUCTION.

*Ninth Article—The Catholic Church—Jesus Christ the invisible Head of the Church—The Pope, the successor of St. Peter, its visible Head.*

Q. What is the ninth article of the Creed?

A. The ninth article of the Creed is, "The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints."

We have now gone through the first eight articles of the Creed, which all relate to one or other of three Persons of the B. Trinity. The remaining four articles contain four of the principal truths revealed to us by God. The most important of all is contained in the ninth article, *The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints*.

But why do I say that this truth is more important than any of the others? Because, if we believe in the Holy Catholic Church, we believe in all that she teaches, that is to say, in all the other truths of religion. All that is contained in the other articles of the Creed is, therefore, contained in this single one, *The Holy Catholic Church*.

There is another reason, my dear children, besides its importance, why this article comes in that place in the Creed which it occupies, immediately after the eighth article which treats of the Holy Ghost. It is because the Church of Christ is the special work of the Holy Spirit. You remember that our B. Lord, while he was yet on earth, ordained his Apostles priests, and bade them go and baptize all nations, teaching them all that he had taught to them (Matt. xxviii. 19). But they were not to begin their mission until after the coming of the Holy Ghost; wherefore he told them to return to Jerusalem after he had ascended, and remain there until they should

be "endued with power from on high" (Luke xxiv. 49 ; Acts i. 4). On the feast of Pentecost this promise was fulfilled. The Holy Ghost came down upon them, enlightening their minds with a wonderful knowledge of heavenly things, inflaming their hearts with a holy zeal, and bestowing upon them those miraculous powers which they required in order to prove to their hearers that they were sent by God. From that day the Old or Jewish Law was done away with, and the New Law, the teaching of Jesus Christ, of which the Jewish Law had been only a figure, remained in its place.

No sooner had they received the Divine Spirit, than the Apostles went forth from that upper room to begin their mission. The first sermon was preached on that very day by St. Peter in the streets of Jerusalem, and three thousand souls were converted to Jesus Christ. From Jerusalem the Apostles soon carried the Divine word to the other cities of Judea, and from thence to the principal countries of the then known world. Wherever they went they converted thousands, both Jews and Pagans, and baptized them, according to our Lord's instructions, in the name of the B. Trinity. But the Apostles could not remain always with their new converts to complete their instruction and administer the Sacraments ; there were other cities and other nations to which the Gospel had not yet been preached. Besides, there were future generations to be provided for, millions yet unborn when the Apostles went to receive their crown. What, then, did the Apostles do, that their work might not die with them ? Following the instructions which our Lord had given them, they ordained, wherever they went, Bishops and Priests to take charge of the newly-converted flocks, instruct them more fully, and administer to them the Holy Sacraments. Thus were numerous Christian congregations formed over the whole world, all of whom were united in believing what the Apostles had taught them, and in worshipping God in the manner in which they had instructed them.

You will now better understand the meaning of the answer to the next question, which, at a time when there

are so many false religions set up in the world, is one of the greatest importance.

Q. What is the Catholic Church?

A. The Catholic Church is the union of all the faithful under one head.

The Catholic Church is the *union*, or assembly, of *all the faithful*, that is, of all those who profess the true faith, *under one head*. From this you see that those do not belong to the Catholic Church who deny her doctrines or do not acknowledge her head. Infidels, therefore, that is, unbelievers, heretics who call in question the teaching of the Church, and schismatics who refuse obedience to her head, are not members of the Church at all.

You will perhaps ask me whether those are members of the Church who believe what she teaches and acknowledge her head, but who lead wicked and irreligious lives. Yes, my dear children, they are members of the Church upon earth; but they will never be members of the Church in heaven, unless they sincerely repent. For the Church on earth consists of all who are baptized and believe, whether good or bad; wherefore our Lord likens her to "a net cast into the sea and gathering together of all kinds of fishes" (Matt. xiii. 47). But at the day of general judgment, the angels will go forth, and will separate the good from the bad, and the good only shall be gathered into the kingdom of heaven.

The Apostle St. Paul beautifully compares the Catholic Church to the human body, which is composed of many different senses and members, each having its own separate office, but all closely united under one head, which rules and directs them all (Ephes. iv. 15, 16, v. 23). Thus, the feet carry the body from place to place, the eyes keep watch to preserve it from danger, the hands do their part in providing for its wants, while the head thinks for and directs the whole. So is it in the Church of Christ. There are many members, or persons who compose it, but all have not the same duty or office. There are those who have to teach and those who have to learn, those who have to give the Sacraments and those who have to

receive them, those who have to rule and those who have to obey. In other words, there are the pastors of the Church, that is, the Bishops and Priests, and there are the simple faithful. Each of these two classes have their own separate office, but both are united in believing the same doctrines and acknowledging the same head.

Q. Who is the Head of the Catholic Church ?

A. The Head of the Catholic Church is Jesus Christ our Lord.

Yes ; *Jesus Christ our Lord is the head of the Catholic Church.* It was he who founded it, and it is he who governs and preserves it. Before he founded the Catholic Church, it was the Jewish Church or Synagogue which taught mankind what they had to believe and do in order to gain heaven. This Church, too, was founded by God, and had God for its head ; but it was only a figure of and to prepare the way for the Catholic Church, which our Lord was to establish, and which was to continue to teach mankind until the end of time. Of this Church Jesus Christ is the Head.

It was not, however, the Will of God that his Divine Son should always remain *visibly* among men, that is to say, in the sight of mankind. He had to ascend to his Heavenly Father, there to sit at the right hand of God, no longer visible to man, till he should come at the last day to judge the world. That his disciples, therefore, might have some one to whom they could have recourse, and from whom they could learn his Will, he chose out of his twelve Apostles one, whom he made their chief, and to whom he gave power to govern his Church and exercise his authority till he should come again. But this is explained to you more fully in the two next answers of the catechism, which I will now ask you.

Q. Has not the Church a visible Head on earth ?

A. Yes ; the Church has a visible Head on earth, the Bishop of Rome, who is the Vicar of Christ.

Q. Why is the Bishop of Rome the Head of the Church ?

A. The Bishop of Rome is the Head of the Church, because he is the successor of St. Peter, whom Christ appointed to be the Head of the Church.

From these answers, my dear children, you learn two



important truths ; first, that it is the holy Apostle *St. Peter*, whom Christ appointed to be the *Head of the Church* ; and secondly, that it is the *Bishop of Rome*, who succeeds to St. Peter, who now rules the Church in his place. For St. Peter was the first Bishop of Rome ; there he governed the Church, and there he suffered martyrdom for the love of Jesus. But though St. Peter is dead, he still lives in the person of his successor, who, in succeeding to the Bishopric of St. Peter, succeeds also to his power and authority. The Bishop of Rome is, therefore, like St. Peter, the visible head of the Catholic Church, being, like him, *the Vicar of Christ*, that is to say, ruling the Church in the name of our B. Lord and by virtue of his authority. For this is the meaning of the word *vicar*—one who acts in the place or name of another. Thus, in every diocese there is some priest who acts in the name of the Bishop in certain things which the Bishop puts under his charge, and he is hence called the Bishop's vicar, or the vicar of the diocese. In this diocese the Very Rev. — is the vicar, as he has been appointed by the Right Rev. —, our Bishop, to act in his name. Every one, therefore, is bound to obey the Very Rev. — the same as the Bishop, because he acts in his place and by his authority. Just in the same way, we are bound to obey the Bishop of Rome as we would obey Jesus Christ himself, because the Bishop of Rome is appointed by our Lord as his Vicar to govern his Church upon earth.

Q. How do you know that Christ appointed St. Peter to be the Head of the Church ?

A. I know that Christ appointed St. Peter to be the Head of the Church, because Christ said to him : "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it ; and to thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xvi. 18, 19).

These words, my dear children, were spoken by our B. Saviour to St. Peter, and were the reward of the glorious profession of faith made by that great Apostle. For our Lord, having one day asked his disciples whom men commonly considered him to be, they answered that some said that he was St. John the Baptist come to life again, and

others that he was Elias, who had been taken up alive to heaven in a fiery chariot, and others that he was a prophet sent by God. Whereupon he asked them what they themselves said. Upon which St. Peter, speaking for the rest, replied,

“Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.”

To this our Lord made answer,

“And I say to thee,

“*Thou art Peter,*

“*And upon this rock I will build my Church,*

“*And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it ;*

“*And to thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven.*

“*And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.*”

From these memorable words you see, first of all, that Jesus Christ gave a new name to St. Peter, whose proper name was Simon Barjona, that is, Simon the Son of John. Our Lord had before declared that he should be called by the name of Peter, for when that Apostle first came to him, brought by his brother Andrew, he said to him, “Thou art Simon, the Son of Jona ; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted, Peter” (John i. 42). For Cephas and Peter are one and the same thing, the one being the Chaldaic and the other the Greek word for *rock*. This name was given to St. Peter on account of his strong faith, and because our B. Lord had destined him to be the firm foundation of his Church. Wherefore, having now repeated and confirmed his name—*I say to thee, thou art Peter*—Christ immediately added, *And upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*. St. Peter, then, is, as we see, the firm foundation on which is built the Church of Christ, against which the gates, that is, all the power, of hell will never be able to prevail.

But St. Peter was not only in the designs of God to be the *foundation* of the Church, he was also to be the *head* and ruler of it. This our Saviour showed clearly in the sentence which follows, *And to thee I will give the keys of*

*the kingdom of heaven.* For who is it who has a right to have in his keeping the keys of a house, or those of a town or castle? Is it not the master of the house and the governor or ruler of the city or fortress? Hence it has always been the custom in war, when a city is given up to the enemy, for the leaders of the vanquished party to present the conqueror with the keys of the place, to signify thereby that he is now the master or ruler of it. St. Peter, therefore, is the master, ruler, or governor, in other words, the Head of the Church, since he has received the keys of it from our B. Lord; for, notice, it is the Church which is here called, as in many other places of Holy Scripture, “the kingdom of heaven.”

It is not sufficient, however, for the master of a house, the governor of a castle, or the ruler of a state to have simply the *title* of authority; he must also have *power* to rule and govern, to make laws and to change them, to give orders and to enforce them. Wherefore Jesus Christ gave this power also, as well as the title, to St. Peter, “*And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.*” And later on our Lord said to St. Peter, “Feed my lambs. Feed my lambs. Feed my sheep” (John xxi. 15–17), to show that he gave him power to rule *all* the faithful, priests as well as people.

These, my dear children, are the magnificent promises which Jesus Christ made to St. Peter, and which have been handed down by him to each of his successors. The Bishop of Rome, therefore, governs the Church of God by virtue of that power and authority which Christ gave to St. Peter. Like him he feeds the lambs and sheep of Christ, being, as St. Peter was, the universal shepherd of the flock; every one, therefore, owes to him a ready and entire obedience. Of him it is equally true, that whatsoever he binds upon earth is bound by Jesus Christ in heaven, and whatsoever he looses here below is loosed also in heaven by our B. Lord. He, too, like St. Peter, to whom he succeeds, is as a firm rock, against which the power of Satan and all the efforts of wicked men shall never prevail. Hence the Church, which is built on this rock,

continues firm and unshaken, notwithstanding all the attacks it has had to sustain during eighteen hundred years, from the malice of the devil, the fury of persecutors, the artifices of heretics, and the hatred of unbelievers.

Q. What is the Bishop of Rome called ?

A. The Bishop of Rome is called the Pope which word signifies Father.

Q. Is the Pope our spiritual Father ?

A. Yes ; the Pope is the spiritual Father of all Christians.

The name which is given to the Bishop of Rome, the successor of St. Peter and visible head of the Church, is a very suitable one. It is that of *Pope* or Father, for the word Pope comes from a Latin word meaning Father. For this reason, in one country, Russia, the priests themselves are called popes, because the people look on them as their spiritual fathers. But throughout the rest of the Christian world, though the name of father is usually given to priests, that of Pope is given only to the Bishop of Rome, because he is the *Universal* Father, that is, the spiritual Father of *all* Christians—of Bishops and Priests as well as of people.

When we speak of any particular Pope, we put the name, which he took, after the title of Pope ; for example, Pope Gregory, Pope Pius, Pope Leo, &c. For as our B. Lord, when he made St. Peter his Vicar on earth, changed his name from Simon to Peter, so do all who are elected to the same office, choose for themselves a new name by which they will be henceforth called. Thus, the present Pope took the name of Leo, and as there have been twelve popes before him who have borne the same name, he is called Leo XIII.

Not many years ago, my dear children, there was to be seen on the map of Italy a small kingdom called the “States of the Church,” the capital of which was the city of Rome. This kingdom was governed by the Pope, who for many ages possessed a *temporal* as well as a spiritual power, being an earthly monarch as well as the Supreme Ruler of the Church of God. You would perhaps like to know how it was that the Pope became a king. It happened in this way. When the great Roman Empire,

which had so persecuted the Church, fell to pieces through the invasion of the Northern barbarians, the people of Rome and the neighbouring provinces chose the Pope as their ruler, he being the only one who had watched with a fatherly care over their safety, and frequently exposed his own life to protect them from the invaders. In later times a fresh tract of country was added to the Pope's little kingdom by the pious Pepin, king of France and Germany. It was thus that Almighty God provided during many centuries for the free government of his Church. Wicked and rapacious kings like our own Henry VIII. would often have persecuted the Pope and interfered with the exercise of his spiritual power, had the Pope been their subject instead of being a free and independent monarch. It happened, however, a few years ago, that a neighbouring monarch, the king of Sardinia and Piedmont, cast covetous eyes on the Pope's little territory, and, in defiance of all justice and religion, invaded it with his armies, usurped the sovereign power, and established his own government in the city of Rome. This sacrilegious spoliation of the Holy See has been followed by the plunder of churches and monasteries, the expulsion of monks and nuns, and many other acts of robbery, violence, and oppression. Meanwhile the Holy Father, being stripped of the means which had been provided by the piety of past ages for the vast expenses attending the government of the Universal Church, is forced to depend on the voluntary offerings of his faithful children. These alms bear the name of Peter's Pence, a title given hundreds of years ago by our Saxon forefathers to the offerings sent annually from this country to the successor of St. Peter. Every good and fervent Catholic should be anxious to add his mite to the collection, which is made in each parish for this purpose, and sent every year to the Holy Father as a token of our obedience and affection.

**Q.** Is the Pope the Shepherd and Teacher of all Christians?

**A.** Yes; the Pope is the Shepherd and Teacher of all Christians, because Christ made St. Peter the Shepherd of the whole flock when he said, "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep." He also prayed

that his "faith" might never fail, and commanded him to "confirm" his brethren (John xxi. 15, 16, 17 ; Luke xxii. 32).

Our B. Saviour, in instructing his disciples, frequently presented himself to them in the character of a loving and watchful shepherd, who is ever seeking to provide his sheep with rich and abundant pastures, who is always on the alert to defend them from ravenous wolves even at the cost of his life, and who spares no pains to seek them out and bring them back to the fold when unhappily they have gone astray. But this Good Shepherd was not always to remain visibly with his flock on earth. Accordingly we find him, after his Resurrection and before his Ascension into heaven, appearing to his disciples by the sea of Galilee, and committing to his chosen Apostle St. Peter, whom he had already promised to make his Vicar and the Ruler of his Church on earth, the charge of his beloved flock. "Simon Peter," said he to him three separate times, "lovest thou me?" And when St. Peter to every question answered, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee," he thrice repeated the solemn charge, "Feed my lambs, feed my lambs, feed my sheep." By these words he bade St. Peter govern, as Shepherd, and nourish his entire flock, the Bishops and Priests who may be compared to the sheep, no less than the simple faithful who are the lambs of the fold.

But what, you will ask, is the spiritual food with which the Supreme Shepherd of the Flock is to nourish the sheep of Christ? It is the heavenly doctrine of revealed truth, which is the word of God. This we see plainly from the answer of our Lord to the devil in the desert, "Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God" (Matt. iv. 4). Hence the catechism says not only that the Pope is the *Shepherd*, but also that he is the *Teacher of all Christians*. He is so, because he succeeds to the charge of St. Peter, whom Christ commissioned to feed both his sheep and his lambs with the word of God.

The catechism goes on to say that our B. Saviour *also prayed that St. Peter's "faith" might never fail, and*

commanded him to "confirm" his brethren. This, my dear children, happened before our Lord's Crucifixion, and refers to the heinous sin into which St. Peter fell, of thrice denying his Divine Master in the court of Caiaphas. Our Lord had previously predicted to St. Peter that his over-confidence which was joined to the neglect of prayer, would give the devil, who earnestly sought his ruin, advantage over him. But he added that he had prayed especially for him, that his *faith* should never fail, though his courage might; and charged him after his repentance to confirm his brethren in their faith by his holy teaching—a teaching which was to be continued in the persons of his successors throughout all ages to the end of time. "Simon, Simon," said he, "behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and thou being once converted confirm thy brethren" (Luke xxii. 31, 32).

Q. Is the Pope infallible?

A. Yes, the Pope is infallible.

Q. What do you mean when you say that the Pope is infallible?

A. When I say that the Pope is infallible, I mean that, as Shepherd and Teacher of all Christians, the Pope cannot err when he defines a doctrine concerning Faith or Morals, to be held by the whole Church.

We come now to a most important question, namely, the Infallibility of the Pope. It is very necessary to be well instructed on this point, for you will often hear speak of it, and it is generally misunderstood and misrepresented by Protestants. What then do we mean when we say that the Pope is infallible? We simply mean that *as Shepherd and Teacher of all Christians, the Pope cannot err when he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals, to be held by the whole Church.* In other words, Jesus Christ has left, to guide and teach us in his place, one who, when he exercises his public office as the supreme Pastor and Teacher, cannot lead us astray or teach us falsehood. And why can he not err like other men? Because our B. Lord is always guiding and helping him by his Holy Spirit to fulfil his important office as Teacher

of the Church of God. He has to feed the sheep and lambs of Christ with the word of heavenly doctrine. He has to confirm the faith of his brethren against the errors of false teachers. It stands to reason, therefore, that our B. Saviour who has given him such an office, will help him to fulfil it. Wherefore he prayed for St. Peter the first Pope; and in his person he prayed for all future Popes that their faith likewise should never fail, but that they should have the special assistance of the Holy Ghost in teaching the Church of God. For this reason, too, he compared St. Peter to a most firm rock on which the Church should be built—that Church against which all the powers of hell should never be able to prevail.

Take notice, however, my dear children, of the last part of the answer of the catechism, for it is most important, *the Pope cannot err when he defines a doctrine concerning Faith or Morals, to be held by the whole Church.* In other words, the Pope is only infallible when he declares, as the Supreme Shepherd of the flock of Christ, that any particular doctrine, regarding what we have to believe or what we have to practise, is revealed by God and must be held by the whole Church. This is what is meant by *defining a doctrine*. It is declaring it to be part of God's Infallible Truth revealed to man, and such a doctrine must always regard Faith or Morals, that is, it must relate to what we have to believe or what we have to practise. For it is by believing what God teaches us and practising what he commands us, that we are to get to heaven, and therefore the Pope, who is the Shepherd appointed to conduct us there, has the special assistance of the Holy Spirit in regard to these two points. You see from this that our Lord's promise to the Pope does not extend to his private life. He may fall into sin or error himself like any other man—he might even die in sin and lose his soul. But he cannot teach error to the sheep and lambs of Christ, when he speaks as Shepherd of the flock to the Universal Church.

I need hardly tell you that it is the mark of a good Catholic to reverence the Pope, to love the Pope, to pray often for the Pope, and to render him exact obedience in



all that he commands. For is he not the head of the Church, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and our own spiritual father? Besides, our holy father the Pope loves us all tenderly; and though he does not know us all by name, yet he thinks of us all, prays for us all, asks after us from our Bishops, sends us his blessing, and sometimes writes us letters, which are read in all the churches, and are called "encyclical letters." Whenever, therefore, you hear Mass or go to Holy Communion, be sure to say a little prayer for the Pope, asking God to give him light and grace to govern the Church wisely, and patience to bear his many trials, for the life of the Pope has always been, from the days of St. Peter, a life of severe trial and suffering.

#### CONVERSION OF ENGLAND.

It is to the zeal and piety of Pope Gregory the Great that England owes its conversion from idolatry to the faith of Christ. Our first forefathers the Britons had already been converted to the Christian religion by missionaries sent from Rome by Pope Lucius, about 180 years after Christ. But a new race of barbarians, from the shores of the Baltic, had invaded England and driven the former inhabitants, the Britons, into the mountains of Wales and the Western counties. The savage conquerors, who were called Saxons and Angles, were as yet idolaters, and wherever they came they destroyed every vestige of Christianity from the face of the land. It chanced that some of their own youths were taken prisoners, sold as slaves, and found their way into the market-place of Rome. A Benedictine monk, named Gregory, who was passing by, stopped to gaze on them, and was moved with admiration on beholding their fair and noble countenances and beautiful auburn hair, which formed so great a contrast to the swarthy features and raven locks of his own countrymen. Touched with pity at their sad fate, he asked of what race they were and whence they came. "They are Angles," was the reply, "from the isle of Britain." "Angles you should have said, not Angles, were they only Christians," replied Gregory. "Alas, how sad it is that a nation of such promise and of form so fair should still be buried in the darkness of idolatry, and lie under the anger of God!" So saying, he returned disconsolate to his monastery, whence he soon issued to go and cast himself at the feet of the Pope, begging to be allowed to preach the gospel to his beloved Angles. Having obtained permission, he set out with great joy, but was pursued and brought back by the people of Rome, who were unwilling that a priest of such singular piety and zeal should be lost to their own city. The Pope dying soon after, Gregory was raised to the chair of St. Peter, and one of

his first cares was to choose out a band of zealous missionaries to undertake the work which he had been so anxious to accomplish in person. This little band was placed under the direction of St. Augustine, a monk of the same monastery to which St. Gregory himself had belonged.

St. Augustine and his companions, having arrived in England, met with a favourable reception from Ethelbert, King of Kent, who gave them full leave to preach in his dominions, and was himself, soon after, converted, along with all his subjects. From Kent the light of the gospel spread over the rest of England, for Almighty God blessed the labours of the devoted missionaries and confirmed their preaching by numerous miracles. St. Augustine, by the advice of St. Gregory, fixed his see in the city of Canterbury, of which he became the first Archbishop. He is called the Apostle of England, because he brought us the light of the true faith; but while we love and reverence him as such, let us never forget that we owe both him and his devoted band of companions to the zeal and fatherly love of that holy Pontiff St. Gregory the Great.

#### ST. LEO THE GREAT AND ATTLA.

About the middle of the fifth century a horde of fierce barbarians, named Huns, led by the terrible Attila, surnamed the Scourge of God, swept over the Roman Empire, destroying everything before them, and covering the whole country with smoking ruins and the dead bodies of the slaughtered inhabitants. Flushed with victory, the savage conquerors at length advanced towards Rome, which the Roman emperors, whose armies had been everywhere defeated, had left without garrison or means of defence. In the midst of the general consternation, the holy Pontiff Leo alone ventured to go to meet the conqueror. Having arrived at the camp of the Huns on the banks of the river Mincio, Leo was admitted into the presence of Attila, and spoke to him with such courage and firmness of the account which he must one day give to God of his actions, that the savage barbarian at once granted the holy Pope all that he asked, promising to withdraw his army and leave Rome unmolested.

It is related that the followers of Attila, astonished at the respect which their terrible chieftain had paid to a Christian priest, asked him, after St. Leo's departure, what was the reason of his unusual conduct. "It was not," said he, "the person of my visitor alone which made such an impression upon me. I saw near the Pontiff a figure far more august, venerable by his white hair, and clad in priestly robes, who held a drawn sword in his hand, and seemed to threaten me, with looks and gestures of terrible meaning, if I did not undertake faithfully to execute all that had been demanded by his envoy."—*Butler's Saints' Lives*.

## TWELFTH INSTRUCTION.

*The Ninth Article, continued—The Church—Her four Marks.*

Q. Has the Church of Christ any marks by which we may know her?

A. Yes ; the Church of Christ has these four marks by which we may know her : she is One—she is Holy—she is Catholic—she is Apostolic.

The Church of Christ is, my dear children, as our B. Lord said, like a city seated on a mountain, which cannot be hid (Matt. v. 14). In other words, she is plain and visible to all ; none can mistake her who are not wilfully blind to the truth. And with reason has our loving Saviour made it so, since he wishes all to be saved. He would not, therefore, have any one to be ignorant of the one only way which leads to eternal life.

It is for this reason that our Lord has given his Church four plain marks, by which any one may know that she is the Church which he has established to teach mankind the way to heaven. And what are these marks ? They are these : *she is One—she is Holy—she is Catholic—she is Apostolic*. These four marks are frequently spoken of in Holy Scripture, and no one who believes the sacred writings can possibly deny that the religion or Church founded by Jesus Christ must have every one of these marks. It follows, therefore, that any religion which has not got them is a false religion, the work of man, and not the Church established by our Lord.

The catechism goes on to explain these marks one by one. Listen attentively, and you will very easily see how it is the Catholic Church alone, among all religions, which possesses these four marks, and how there is not a single one of these marks to which any of the sects or false religions, which you see about you, can establish a claim. If you are well instructed on this important point, my dear children, you may perhaps, one day or other, be, under God, the happy means of pointing out to some poor wan-

dering soul the one only road which leads to the kingdom of heaven.

Q. How is the Church One ?

A. The Church is One, because all her members agree in one Faith, have all the same Sacraments and Sacrifice, and are all united under one Head.

The Church is One. This is the first mark or sign whereby all men may know which is the Church founded by Jesus Christ. For our B. Lord did not make *two* religions, but *one* ; he did not teach *two* faiths, but *one* ; he did not say that there are *two* roads to heaven, but expressly declared that there is only *one* ; “ Narrow is the gate and straight is the way that leadeth to life ” (Matt. vii. 14). And on another occasion he said, “ Other sheep I have that are not of this fold ; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ; and there shall be *one fold and one shepherd* ” (John x. 16). For the same reason St. Paul wrote, “ One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism ” (Eph. iv. 5).

Now look at the Catholic Church, to which you, my dear children, have the happiness to belong, and see how perfectly she possesses this mark. She is

One in *doctrine*, for all her members agree in one Faith ;

One in *worship*, for they have all the same Sacraments and Sacrifice ;

One in her *Head*, for they all are subject to and are united under one Head.

First of all, she is One in *doctrine*, that is to say, in her faith or belief. For there is no difference or disagreement among Catholics about matters of faith, no disputing or wrangling about what is God's truth ; every Catholic in the world believes the same, because every one believes what the Church teaches. The simplest child believes exactly the same as the most learned Bishop, the king or emperor the same as the poorest of his subjects, the converted negro the same as the civilised European. But how different is it with the false religions which we see around us, and which, though they all join with one

another in attacking the Catholic Church, differ most widely in what they profess to believe; and not only so, but hardly two of their ministers can be found to agree on doctrines of the utmost importance. Thus, in the Protestant Church of England, for example, there have been disputes of late years as to whether Baptism is necessary for Salvation; whether Communion, or the Lord's Supper, as they call it, really contains the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ; and even as to whether the whole of the Scripture is the inspired word of God. In these and other matters of equal importance, the most learned of the Protestant clergy, and their very Bishops, are found to take opposite sides.\*

Secondly, the Catholic Church is One in her *worship*. For, go where you will, you will find among Catholics the same seven Sacraments and the same Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which are the most sacred and necessary parts of religious worship. Hence it is that a Catholic is at home in whatever part of the world he may be. Whether he be in England or in Italy, in America or in China, in Africa or in Australia, it is all the same. Let him enter into a Catholic church or chapel and he there beholds the same ceremonies, the same sacred rites, to which he has been accustomed from his infancy in his own land. The priest is at the altar, clad in the sacred vestments, offering up the Adorable Sacrifice of the Mass, and the words that he utters fall familiarly on the stranger's ear, for they are the selfsame which he has so often heard, and perhaps answered to, when, as a child, he learnt to serve Mass and minister at the altar of God. Or perhaps he sees the priest sitting in the confessional hearing the confessions of the crowds who flock about him, or administering the Holy Communion at the altar rails. Yes, my dear children, it makes a thrill run through your heart when, in a distant land, amid strangers speaking in an unknown tongue, you discover, on entering the House of God, that you have brothers even there; children, like yourselves, of the Holy Catholic Church, worshippers

\* See the Gorham Discussion, the Tracts for the Times, the Colenso Dispute, &c.

at the same altar, frequenters of the same Sacraments, partakers of the same Life-giving Food, the Holy Communion. How different from the empty forms of Protestant worship, which differ in every country according to the particular sect which happens to prevail !

The third way in which the Church is One is in her Head. All the members of the Church acknowledge one Head, Jesus Christ, and his Vicar, or representative upon earth, the Bishop of Rome. What beautiful order and harmony reign in the Catholic Church ! The people are subject to the Priests, the Priests to the Bishops, the Bishops to the Pope, and the Pope to Jesus Christ, in whose name he governs the Church. It is just the same as in the human body—your body, I mean, which is made of flesh and blood. It has many limbs or members, for example, the hands, the arms, the feet, &c. ; but it has only one head, which directs or governs the whole body. It would be strange indeed if a man were to be born with two heads. One of them might want the feet to move in this direction, the other in an opposite way ; one might want the hand to write a letter, the other to weed the garden, and the poor hands and feet would not know which to obey. Hence there would be a thousand quarrels, contentions, and disputes. And so it would be in the Church of God, if there were not one Head to rule all, to direct all, and to settle all disputes. It is for this reason that Protestants differ so much among themselves as to what to believe, and continually split into so many new sects, because they have no common ruler or head to settle all their differences. And if they do acknowledge a head at all, they acknowledge different ones in different countries ; and, what is the strangest of all, they make kings and queens the heads of their religions. Thus, Protestants in England acknowledge Queen Victoria the head of their Church, and Protestants in Prussia the King of Prussia ; and they appeal to them in their religious disputes as if the King or the Queen were sure to know what Christ taught or what he did not teach. But we, my dear children, have for our visible Head the successor of him on whom Christ built his Church, and to whom he gave

the keys of the kingdom of heaven, with power to bind and loose.

“I say to thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven” (Matt. xvi. 18, 19).

**Q.** How is the Church Holy ?

**A.** The Church is Holy because she teaches a holy doctrine, offers to all the means of holiness, and is distinguished by the eminent holiness of so many thousands of her children.

The second mark of the Catholic Church, being the true Church of Christ, is, that she is Holy. For it is plain that the Church which was established by our Lord must be Holy, since it was founded by Jesus Christ, the God of all Holiness, since he is also the Head of it, and since it was established by him as a means of making men good and bringing them to heaven. Now, the Catholic Church fulfils this mark ; she is Holy as well as One. This does not mean, however, that all Catholics are holy (would that they were !), but that if they are not, it is their own fault, since the Church teaches them how to be holy, and supplies them with the means of becoming holy. Many neglect these means, it is true, but many also make good use of them, and become very holy and pleasing to God. Hence the catechism says that the Church is Holy in three ways :

*First.*—In her *doctrine* or teaching.

*Secondly.*—In the *means of holiness* which she supplies.

*Thirdly.*—In the *eminent holiness of many of her children.*

First of all.—The Church *teaches a holy doctrine*, that is to say, she teaches a doctrine which will be sure to make you good and holy if you only follow it. Thus, she teaches you not to curse or swear, not to quarrel or fight, not to tell lies, not to steal, and to pay back if you have stolen. She reminds you continually of death, which will

come quickly upon you, of the strict judgment which will follow, of hell, where the wicked will be punished, and of heaven, where the good will be rewarded. She puts before you the example of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, obedient to Mary and Joseph, meek and gentle towards his enemies, patient under the most cruel torments, and dying out of pure charity to redeem mankind. She teaches you that if you are obedient, gentle, and patient, after the example of our B. Lord, if you love God and keep his commandments, you will receive a special reward for every good act which you perform. Such teaching, my dear children, cannot fail to make a man good and holy if he follows it. On the contrary, the Protestant doctrine, that good works have no merit in the sight of God; or the teaching of some of their first leaders, that some men are born to be saved and others to be damned, is not likely to make any one good, but rather the very opposite.

Secondly.—The Church is Holy, because she not only teaches us to be holy, but supplies us with *the means* of becoming so. These means are prayer and the Sacraments, by which we obtain the grace of God, without which no one can become good or holy. Thus, when we are born, we are stained with the sin which our first parents committed in the garden of Paradise; but this is washed away by the Sacrament of Baptism, which we receive soon after our birth. Then, when we are grown up and fall into sin ourselves, it is forgiven us by the Sacrament of Penance, if we be truly sorry and firmly resolve to avoid sin for the future. We receive also the Holy Ghost, in Confirmation, to strengthen us and help us to continue good; and we partake of the very source or fountain of Holiness in the Holy Communion, which is the Body and Blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Then again there is prayer, which, when it is well said, always obtains for us help from God; and finally, there is that abundant means of grace, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is these graces and helps, which our B. Lord gave to his Church, and gives through his Church to us, that enable us to become good and holy. So you see that it is



their own fault if Catholics are not good, since they have so many means of holiness in the Church, if they will only make use of them.

Thirdly. — The Church is Holy, because *she is distinguished by the eminent holiness of so many thousands of her children.* Eminent means great, so, when we speak of any great man, we often say that he is a very eminent man. Now, there are very many persons in the Church of Christ, men and women, grown-up persons and children, too, who, by following the holy teaching of the Church and making good use of the means of holiness which she offers, have arrived at very great or eminent holiness. How many thousands of holy martyrs have generously suffered all kinds of torments, and allowed themselves to be put to a most cruel death, sooner than renounce their faith and the duty which they owed to God ! How many thousands of holy Bishops and Priests have devoted themselves to preach the Gospel to the poor, visit the sick and the dying, and labour in every way for the good of souls, willing to spend their own lives in the midst of sufferings and privations, so that they could but promote the glory of God and the salvation of their fellow-men ! And again, how many thousands of holy monks and nuns, many of them born of royal or noble families, have left home, riches, friends, and families, in order to enter into some religious order, where they might spend their lives in teaching and relieving the poor, comforting the sick and the suffering, and praying for the conversion of sinners ! Finally, how many in every station of life, soldiers, tradesmen, servants, labourers, and mechanics, have led most holy lives in the midst of the world, edifying every one by their virtues, and are now gone to heaven to receive their reward ! Some of these, who are declared by the Church to have lived in great holiness and died in the grace of God, are called Saints, for Saint means holy ; but there are many Saints in heaven whose names we do not know, and whose lives we have never heard of. Let us, my dear children, by a good and virtuous life, try to be among that happy number, that so we may share in their eternal reward. Thus shall we, too, give glory to God and

honour to his Church, for the holiness of her children is the glory of the Church; while, on the contrary, the bad lives of many Catholics who disobey her teaching and abuse her graces, are frequently made, though unjustly, a reproach against the faith which they profess, and the Church to which, in name only, they belong.

#### PARABLE OF THE COCKLE.

"The kingdom of heaven," says our Lord, "is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way. And when the blade had sprung up and had brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle.

"And the servants of the good man of the house coming, said to him, *Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? Whence, then, hath it cockle?* And he said to them, *An enemy hath done this.* And the servants said to him, *Wilt thou that we go and gather it up?* And he said, *No; lest perhaps, gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Suffer both to grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, 'Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barn.'*

"Then, having sent away the multitude, he came into the house, and his disciples came to him saying, *Expound to us the parable of the cockle of the field.* Who made answer and said to them, *He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man. And the good seed are the children of the kingdom. And the cockle are the children of the wicked one. And the enemy that sowed them is the devil. But the harvest is the end of the world. And the reapers are the angels"* (Matt. xiii.).

Q. What do you mean by the word Catholic?

A. By the word Catholic I mean Universal.

Q. How is the Church Catholic or Universal?

A. The Church is Catholic or Universal because she subsists in all ages, teaches all nations, and is the one Ark of Salvation for all.

The third mark of the true Church is, that she is Catholic or Universal. For our B. Lord did not come from heaven to save the people of his own time only, or the people of a particular country, but *all* men, in whatever age they might live, or in whatever country they might dwell. Now the Catholic Church is the only one which has existed in all ages and preached to all nations,

and therefore she is the only one which can justly lay claim to the glorious title of Catholic or Universal.

First of all.—She is Universal as to *time*, or, in other words, *she subsists in all ages*. Eighteen hundred years have passed away, my dear children, since our Lord first founded and established the Catholic Church, and during all this time she has continued her glorious mission of saving souls and leading them to heaven. Fifteen hundred years had gone by before any of the different sects which we see about us had any name or existence, and each of them can go back only one or two, or at most three hundred and fifty years, to the time when its founder first rebelled against the teaching of the Church. Thus, the Protestants go back to Luther and Calvin, who first began their religion a little more than three hundred years ago ; the Presbyterians to John Knox, who lived shortly after ; the Methodists to John Wesley, who died only a hundred years since. But the Catholic Church goes back eighteen hundred years to Jesus Christ, her Divine founder, having with her the security of his Divine promise that she shall never fail, but that He himself will remain with her to the end of time.

Secondly.—The Catholic Church is Universal as to *place* ; *she teaches all nations*. Before our B. Lord ascended into heaven, he bade his disciples go out into the world, and teach all nations what he had taught to them. In obedience to his commandment, they went forth and preached the Gospel to the Greeks, the Romans, and many pagan nations. The Bishops and Priests who came after them continued their work, visiting and converting those countries to which the Apostles in their lifetime had not been able to preach. Thus it was that the Popes, who succeeded in regular order to St. Peter, sent St. Augustine and his companions to convert England, St. Patrick to convert Ireland, St. Boniface to convert Germany, and St. Francis Xavier to convert the East Indies. There is not, indeed, a country in the world where the Catholic missionaries have not penetrated, nor a soil which has not been watered with the blood of Catholic martyrs. And go where you will, my dear

children, among the mountains of Asia, the back woods of America, the sandy plains of Africa, or the distant isles of the Southern Ocean, there is not a country nor a province where you will not find fellow Catholics, fellow-worshippers with you at the same altar, fellow-children of the same Universal Church. On the contrary, other religions are confined mostly to one or two countries, and number very few followers compared with the mighty number of Catholics. For by far the greater portion of those who believe in Jesus Christ, that is to say, of Christians throughout the world, belong to the Catholic Church. In this country, unhappily, owing to the cruelties which were practised by Henry VIII., Queen Elizabeth, and the succeeding monarchs in plundering, persecuting, and putting Catholics to death, it happens that Catholics are fewer in number than Protestants; but in other countries it is not so. Spain and Portugal are all Catholic, Italy is Catholic, France and Belgium are Catholic; so is the greater portion of Austria. South America is almost all Catholic; and in every country where the Christian religion is persecuted, as in China, Cochin China, and Japan, whatever Christians there are, with very few exceptions, belong to the Catholic Church. In fact, if you take the entire world, and number all those who go by the name of Christians, you will find that while the number of your fellow Catholics amounts to as many as 200 millions, all the different sects of Protestants united, that is to say, English Protestants, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, &c., all joined together, do not amount to the half of that number.

You see, then, how justly the name of Catholic, or Universal, is given to the Church to which you have the happiness of belonging, and how little claim any other religion can show to this title.

In the third place, the Church is Catholic, because, as the catechism says, *she is the one Ark of Salvation for all*. The Holy Fathers frequently compare the Church to the Ark of Noah, into which all were gathered who were to be preserved from the waters of the Deluge. For as Noah built the Ark as a safe refuge for those who,

believing the Divine Word, should be found within its doors when the floodgates of heaven should be opened, so did our Lord found his Church that he might gather within it all true believers before the anger of God should be let loose on the sinful world at the day of judgment. On that day those who are not found within the Ark of the Church will not be acknowledged by Jesus Christ as his disciples, nor by the Heavenly Father as his children. "He that has not the Church for his mother," says St. Augustine, "cannot have God for his father."

Notice, however, my dear children, that not all who are members of the Church by their Baptism and profession of the Catholic Faith will be saved at the last day; it is required that they should also be found in a state of grace, that is, free from grievous sin. For the Church, as we have already seen when speaking of the mark of Holiness, contains both good and bad, and it is not till the last day that God will send his angels to separate the sheep from the goats. So also do we read in the history of Noah's Ark, that it contained both clean and unclean animals, but that after the Deluge was over, when Noah offered a sacrifice of thanksgiving, the clean animals alone were chosen for the victims, the unclean being rejected as unworthy to be presented to God.

Since then, my dear children, our own holy religion is the only one, universal both as to time and place, and is the only one also which even *claims* to be the One Ark of Salvation provided for the whole of mankind, it follows that it alone can lay title to the name of *Catholic*. And indeed this name has been given to her by the common consent of mankind in all ages; so that while the different sects of heretics are known by the name of their founder as the Lutherans, Calvinists and Wesleyans, or from some part of their teaching as Baptists, Presbyterians, &c., our own holy religion has always been distinguished by the name of Catholic, a name which is not denied her even by those who try in vain to claim for themselves the same title.

## THE NAME OF CATHOLIC.

The great St. Augustine, writing against the Manichees, to whose sect he had in his youth belonged, says, that, among other motives which kept him in the Catholic Church, was the very name of *Catholic*, which is so peculiar to her, that heretics, with all their efforts, have never been able to rob her of that glorious title. "For though they all," says the holy Doctor, "lay claim to the name and title of Catholic, yet there is not one among them who is called by that name, nor is there a heretic who, if you met him in the street and asked him where was the Catholic Church, would dare to direct you to his own schismatical assembly."—*St. Augustine*.

How true are these words, written by St. Augustine 1500 years ago, of the Catholic Church and the heretics of the present day !

Q. How is the Church Apostolic ?

A. The Church is Apostolic, because she holds the doctrines and traditions of the Apostles, and because, through the unbroken succession of her Pastors, she derives her Orders and her Mission from them.

The fourth mark of the true Church is, that she is Apostolic. This follows, my dear children, from her being the Church of Christ ; for if she be the Church founded by Jesus Christ, she must be the Church of the Apostles also, since our B. Lord made them the first Bishops and Priests of his Church. Now, the Catholic Church, and she alone, possesses this mark.

In the first place, the Catholic Church is shown to be *Apostolic because she holds the doctrine and traditions of the Apostles*, whereas all other religions have thrown away some part or other of their teaching. Thus Luther denied the efficacy of good works and the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, which are both clearly taught by the Apostle St. James ; while Calvin denied the right of Bishops to govern the Church of God, which is plain not only from St. Paul's Epistles, but from the tradition of the Apostles, that is from their teaching as handed down from age to age. The same may be said of the other sects. And indeed, they have gradually denied, one by one, almost every doctrine taught by our B. Lord and his Apostles, till hardly a shred of revealed truth is to be found among them. The Catholic Church, on the other

hand, has preserved the teaching of the Apostles whole and entire, guarding with the greatest vigilance—not only their Sacred Writings, but also their teaching by word of mouth, which has been preserved in the Church from the time of the Apostles under the guardianship of God's Holy Spirit. It is to the necessity of preserving these precious traditions that St. Paul alludes when he writes to his disciple St. Timothy, "The things which thou hast heard of me by many witnesses, the same commend to faithful men who shall be fit to teach others also" (2 Tim. ii. 2).

But it is not only from her careful guardianship of the doctrine of the Apostles that the Catholic Church establishes her claim to the title of Apostolic, she is also clearly the very Church of the Apostles, *because through the unbroken succession of her Pastors she derives her Orders and her Missions from them.* In other words, the Apostles before they departed this life ordained other Bishops and Priests to minister in their stead, and sent them out, as they had been sent by our Lord, to preach the Gospel and convert the world. These in their turn ordained and sent out others, and so it has gone on in an *unbroken succession* to the present day. Thus, for example, you may read in any book of history the names of all the Popes, or Bishops of Rome, from the time of St. Peter down to his present Holiness, Leo XIII., with the years when they began to reign and when they died or suffered martyrdom for the faith, showing most clearly how the Apostolic succession has continued ever unbroken in the Catholic Church. Hence the Sacred *Orders* which our Bishops and Priests exercise—their power to forgive sins, say Mass, baptize, &c.,—are the same which our B. Saviour bestowed on the Apostles; while their Divine Mission to preach the Gospel and convert mankind, is also equally derived from the Apostles, who in their turn had received the same from Jesus Christ himself, and He from his Heavenly Father. "As my Father hath sent me," said he, "I also send you. Going therefore teach all nations" (John xx. 21; Matt. xxviii. 19).

Since then, my dear children, our holy Mother the

Church has her Doctrine from the Apostles, and has also received from the same her Orders and Mission by the uninterrupted succession of her Pastors, it is evident that she can justly claim the title of Apostolic ; and since she is at the same time, as we have seen, One, Holy and Catholic, it is no less evident that she is the Church of God—the one Ark of Salvation provided for fallen man by his Divine Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. Can the Church err in what she teaches ?

A. No ; the Church cannot err in what she teaches as to faith or morals, for she is our infallible guide in both.

The Catholic Church, having been appointed by our B. Lord to guide us to eternal life, cannot fall into any error in her public teaching ; otherwise she would not fulfil the end for which her Divine Founder made her. The catechism says, that *she cannot err in what she teaches as to faith or morals*. This means that she cannot make any mistake in teaching us what we have to *believe*, which is what is meant by *faith*, or what we have to *do*, which is what is meant by the word *morals*. In other words, she is Infallible, that is to say, she is preserved by a particular guardianship of the Holy Spirit from all danger of mistake or error. But in what way does she teach us these great and sublime truths, and how shall we know when we hear her voice ? Sometimes, my dear children, she instructs us by the decrees of her General Councils, which are composed of the assembled Bishops of the Universal Church presided over by the Pope, and sometimes she teaches us by the mouth of the Sovereign Pontiff alone. For the Pope being the Head of the Church and Vicar of our Lord, speaks in the Name of the Church and in the Name of his Divine Master, being, as we have seen, himself preserved from error when he defines a doctrine as to faith or morals as necessary to be believed by all the faithful. When, therefore, we speak of the Church being infallible, or of the infallibility of the Church, we simply mean that she is preserved by God from the possibility of falling into any error or mistake in her public teaching.

You see now, my dear children, what it is which makes



the faith of a Catholic so firm and secure. It is because he does not presume to judge for himself what our B. Lord taught or what he did not teach, but simply believes what the Church teaches, knowing that Jesus Christ has appointed her to make known his Divine truths to mankind. If ever, therefore, we are tempted against our faith, we have only to say, "I believe, O Lord, whatever the Catholic Church teaches," and immediately the temptation will vanish.

**Q.** How do you know that the Church cannot err in what she teaches?

**A.** I know that the Church cannot err in what she teaches, because Christ has promised that the gates of hell shall never prevail against his Church; that the Holy Ghost shall teach her all things, and that He Himself will be with her all her days, even to the consummation of the world (Matt. xvi. 18; John xiv. 16, 26; Matt. xxviii. 20).

In this answer are contained three clear and distinct proofs from the Holy Scripture, that our B. Lord will never allow his Church to fall into error. For he has solemnly promised—

*First.*—That the gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church.

*Secondly.*—That the Holy Ghost shall teach her all truth.

*Thirdly.*—That he himself will abide with her for ever.

In the first place, our B. Lord declared, at the same time that he appointed St. Peter to be his Vicar upon earth, *that the gates of hell should never be able to prevail against his Church.* "The gates of hell," my dear children, in the language of the Holy Scriptures, means "the power of hell," inasmuch as the gates of a fortified city are the strongest and most important portion of its defences. These plain words of our Lord are, therefore, a convincing proof that the devil can never for a moment get the better of the Catholic Church, which he certainly would be doing if he could get her to teach false doctrine to her children. In other words, it follows from this promise that the Church is infallible, or incapable of error.

In the second place, Jesus Christ has promised *that the Holy Ghost shall teach his Church all things*. This promise was made by him at his last supper, when, being about to part from his beloved disciples, he told them not to let their hearts be troubled, for he would, when he had ascended into heaven, send them another Comforter, who should abide with them for ever, the Spirit of Truth, who should teach them all truth, and bring to their minds whatever he had himself taught to them (John xiv. 16, 26). Now, if the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, dwells for ever with the Church, teaching her all truth, as our Lord has expressly promised, it stands to reason that she cannot teach her children untruth; in other words, it follows that she is incapable of going astray in her public teaching.

Finally, our B. Lord has promised *to remain himself also with his Church until the end of time*. These were the parting words of Jesus to his disciples. "Behold," said he, "I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." Now we cannot for a moment suppose that our B. Redeemer could remain with a Church which had been deceived by the devil and led by him to teach false doctrine. But he *has* promised to remain with his Church, of which, indeed, he is the Spouse and the Invisible Head. It is plain, therefore, that the Church cannot go wrong in her teaching, otherwise she would have fallen under the power of the devil, and could no longer have our Lord abiding with her.

#### COUNCIL OF THE VATICAN.

Towards the close of the year 1869, upon the Feast of our Lady's Immaculate Conception, there met together in the great Church of St. Peter at Rome a vast assembly of Catholic Bishops, gathered together from all parts of the world. These venerable Prelates, to the number of more than 600, had flocked to Rome at the voice of the Vicar of Christ, the saintly Pius IX., to rally round the chair of St. Peter in defence of Catholic Doctrine, and to expose and condemn the errors of an unbelieving age. This magnificent assembly of the Pastors of the Church will be known in history by the name of the Council of the Vatican, being the twentieth General Council that has met since the time of the Apostles. Like the other Councils, such as the Council of Nice, the Council of Trent, &c., it takes its

name from the place where it was held, the church of St. Peter being attached to the *Vatican* Palace where the Pope resides.

It is related in the history of the first General Council, which met at Nice in the year 325 to condemn the heresy of Arius, that there might be seen among the assembled Bishops many whose sightless eyes and mangled limbs bore testimony to the tortures which they had so generously sustained in defence of the Faith during the persecutions of the Pagan Emperors. A somewhat similar sight might be witnessed in the Vatican Council, where there came together from the far East holy Bishops who had nobly confessed the Faith and endured cruel tortures for the name of Jesus in the prisons of China, Tong-King, and the Corea. For the Church of Jesus Christ is ever the same, fruitful in Saints and Martyrs, and in good and devoted shepherds, who are ready, like their Divine Master, to sacrifice at any time their lives for their flocks.

The Council of the Vatican is not yet concluded, having been suspended in consequence of the unjust invasion and seizure of the States of the Church by Victor Emanuel, King of Sardinia and Piedmont. It has, however, accomplished a great portion of its labours, having condemned many prevailing errors, and passed a decree that will make it ever memorable in the history of the Church. This is no other than the definition of the Infallibility of the Pope. In other words, the assembled Bishops of the Universal Church, presided over by the Sovereign Pontiff himself, have solemnly declared that it has ever been the belief and teaching of the Church of God, and that it is a truth of Faith revealed by God himself, that the Bishop of Rome, the successor of St. Peter, cannot err when he defines a doctrine concerning Faith or Morals to be held by the whole Church.

## THIRTEENTH INSTRUCTION.

### *Ninth Article concluded—The Communion of Saints—Purgatory.*

Q. What is meant by the Communion of Saints?

A. By the Communion of Saints, we mean that all the members of the Church in Heaven, on earth, and in Purgatory, are in communion with each other, as being one body in Jesus Christ.

We now come to the second part of the ninth article of the Creed, namely, *the Communion of Saints*. This doctrine is the necessary consequence of that of the Catholic Church, and therefore it is joined with it in one article.

Listen and I will explain to you how this is, and also the meaning of this consoling doctrine.

You remember, I dare say, that when I asked, a Sunday or two since, this question, "What is the Catholic Church?" you answered me in the words of the catechism, "The union of all the faithful under one Head;" and in reply to my next question, you said, that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. To make us understand better the nature of this union, St. Paul, as I then told you, compares the Church of Christ to the human body, in which there is only one head, but many limbs, senses and members, which have all some office to perform for the common good of the whole body. Thus, the hands work for its support, the feet convey it from place to place, the eyes watch to guard it from danger, &c. So is it, my dear children, in the Church of Christ. There are many members, some of whom are on earth, some in Heaven, and some in Purgatory, but one Head, Jesus Christ, to whom all are subject, being employed alike in accomplishing his Adorable Will. From this it follows that all these various members of the Church are closely united with one another, as forming part of the same body, obeying the same Head, and having the selfsame object in view, which they assist each other to accomplish. Now this is what we mean by the Communion of Saints, but it is more fully explained in the three following questions and answers, which treat of the three classes of members who compose the body of the Church, namely—

1. *The faithful on earth, or Church Militant*, as they are called, because they are still fighting the battles of God against the wicked spirits.

2. *The Saints in Heaven, or Church Triumphant*, who have conquered the devil and are now enjoying the fruits of their victory.

3. *The holy souls in Purgatory, or Church Suffering*, since they are now enduring those grievous pains which, by purifying them from all lesser stains and satisfying the Justice of Almighty God, will enable them to find admission into the glory of Paradise.

First of all, we speak of the faithful on earth.

Q. How are the faithful on earth in communion with each other?

A. The faithful on earth are in communion with each other by professing the same Faith, obeying the same authority, and assisting each other with their prayers and good works.

The catechism, my dear children, here mentions three of the principal ways in which we communicate in holy things with our brethren upon earth. In the first place, *we profess the same Faith*, namely, the Catholic Faith, the teaching of the Church of God. Secondly, *we obey the same Head*, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and his Vicar on earth who is the Bishop of Rome. And thirdly, *we assist each other by our prayers and good works*. For as we are members of one and the same body, it follows that whatever good each one does, profits not only himself but every individual member of the body, that is, of the Church to which he belongs. In this manner, the Masses and Communion and prayers and works of penance, which are offered up to God throughout the world by so many holy priests and religious, and other virtuous Catholics, obtain for us, their fellow-members, very many graces, though we know not at the time through whose prayers they come. But besides this general blessing in which each one shares, it is our happy privilege, by virtue of that intimate union which exists among us all, as members of one body, to be able to help in a special manner any one of our fellow-members for whom we are particularly bound, or wish to pray. And you will easily understand this from what happens in the human body, which is so beautiful a model and pattern of the Catholic Church. If your foot is bruised, your hand can dress and bandage it; if your eye is tortured with a fly or speck of dust, your fingers can relieve it. If your hands themselves are numbed with cold, your feet can carry them to be warmed in the sun's rays or at the blazing fire. And so it is in the Catholic Church. If we see any of our fellow-members suffering or in want, or cold and lukewarm in the service of God, we can, by our prayers at least, if not by our words and works, comfort and strengthen them in their sufferings, obtain for them from God that relief which they stand in

need of, and warm their hearts once more with the fire of Divine love.

You see from this, my dear children, how unhappy are those who, in punishment of some heinous or scandalous crime, are, by the command of the Pope, the Vicar of Christ, to whom power has been given to bind and to loose, shut out from the Communion of the Church. By this severe punishment, which is called *excommunication*, the unhappy sinner is cut off as a useless and pernicious member from the mystical body, of which Christ is the head, just as we should cut off a leg or an arm which had begun to mortify, lest the whole body should become infected. The member thus excommunicated, being separated from the Church, is thereby deprived of all share in those prayers, good works, Holy Sacrifices, Sacraments, and spiritual graces, which, by the Communion of Saints, are the common property of all the faithful. He is like a rotten branch that is cut off from the tree, into which the sap of the parent trunk no longer penetrates, and which is good for nothing but as fuel for the fire. We have a terrible example of this most severe punishment related in the Holy Scriptures, in one of the letters of St. Paul, in which he excommunicates the incestuous Corinthian, and declares that, in punishment of his wicked and scandalous conduct, he gives him up to the power of the devil (1 Cor. v.). You will also find many examples of the same punishment related in the history of the Church.

Q. How are we in communion with the Saints in Heaven?

A. We are in communion with the Saints in Heaven by honouring them as the glorified members of the Church; and also by our praying to them, and by their praying for us.

The Saints of God are, as I have told you, truly members of the Church and our fellow-members in Jesus Christ. For, though they have passed out of the world by death, they are not dead to us, but only removed into the presence of God, where they witness our combats, animate us by their example, and help us by their prayers. Thus, there is a real and continual communication kept up between us and them. We on our part honour them as

the glorified members of Jesus Christ, we praise and bless God for the great graces which he has bestowed upon them and the glory with which he has crowned them, and we congratulate the Saints themselves upon their glorious victory and the happiness which they are now enjoying. But, not forgetting our own wants and miseries ; we also *pray to them*, asking them to exert the influence which they possess at the throne of God in our behalf, and to obtain for us all the graces both of soul and body that we stand in need of. They, on their side, gladly grant our request and continually plead for us before God, imploring him with the most earnest supplications that we may have grace to walk in their footsteps and may one day be united to their happy company.

Q. How are we in communion with the souls in Purgatory ?

A. We are in communion with the souls in Purgatory by helping them with our prayers and good works : “It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from sins” (2 Mach. xii. 46).

The poor suffering souls in Purgatory, my dear children, are no less our fellow-members in Jesus Christ than are the Saints in heaven and the faithful upon earth. Consequently we can hold communion with them, and can help them with our prayers and good works, as we also are helped in our turn by the glorified members of the Church in heaven. How sweet and consoling is this doctrine of our Faith ! Those whom we once loved on earth, our parents, relations, and friends, though removed from our sight, are not, if at least they died in the grace of God, gone beyond our reach. If not already in heaven interceding for us, they are at least in purgatory, where we can follow them by our prayers, console them in their sufferings, and obtain for them a speedy admission to the joys of heaven. Hence the Scripture says, that *it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead*. Never forget this pious practice, my dear children. Pray for the poor suffering souls in purgatory at your night and morning prayers, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and especially whenever you approach the Holy Communion. Often repeat with fervour that little prayer used so fre-

quently by the Church in her Divine Office, "May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace!" And they, in their turn, will not forget you. Even now, in the midst of their sufferings, there is little doubt but that their prayers frequently ascend to God for his choicest blessings on those who come to their relief. But especially when they are at length numbered with the Saints and admitted to the presence of God, will they plead your cause at the throne of Divine grace; and when, in your turn, you yourselves shall have to pass through that cleansing fire, those holy souls will gladly fly to your relief, assuage your sufferings, and obtain for you by their prayers a speedy entrance into the joys of eternal life.

We read in Holy Scripture, in the second book of Machabees, a striking example of the care which the Jews were wont to take to fulfil the sacred duty of praying for the dead. When the valiant captain Judas Machabæus was fighting against the generals of King Antiochus, he suffered an unexpected reverse, and lost several of his men in battle in a manner which he could not account for. In the end, however, he gained the victory; and, on returning to the field of battle, in order to carry off for burial the bodies of the slain, he discovered, hid beneath their garments, certain idolatrous offerings, which these unhappy men had stolen from the temples of Jamnia during the recent sacking of that city. Judas at once perceived that God had suffered them to be slain in punishment of their sin. Trusting, however, that their untimely death had been accepted in atonement of their crime, and that they were not condemned at least to eternal torments, he determined to send rich presents to Jerusalem for the purpose of having sacrifice offered for the remission of their sin and the repose of their souls. He accordingly made a collection among his soldiers, and sent, as the Scripture tells us, twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead. *It is, therefore, adds the inspired writer, a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from sins.*



Q. What do you mean by Purgatory ?

A. By Purgatory I mean a place where souls suffer for a time after death on account of their sins.

Yes ; Purgatory is a *place where souls suffer for a time after death on account of their sins*. This is all that the Church teaches us with respect to the nature of Purgatory. It is a place of *suffering*, but not of *eternal* suffering ; and it is a place where the *soul* alone suffers, for, as to the body, it remains in the grave after our death until the day of general judgment, when there will be no more purgatory, but only heaven and hell. It is, moreover, a place of *purgation* or cleansing, as its name signifies ; that is to say, it is a place where the soul is purified from those lesser stains which prevent its entrance into the kingdom of heaven, into which nothing defiled can ever enter. As to the nature of the punishment which the soul suffers in Purgatory, we know nothing, except that the sufferings of Purgatory are far greater than any of the sufferings of this mortal life ; for there, God punishes sin as it deserves, that is to say, with strict Justice, whereas in this life he always tempers Justice with Mercy, and whatever be the sufferings which he sends us here, they are always far less than what the greatness of our sins deserves. With what care, therefore, ought we not, my dear children, to avoid those lesser sins, which, though they may not be sufficiently grievous to cause the eternal loss of our souls, will certainly have to be atoned for by most severe punishments either in this life or in purgatory !

Q. What souls go to Purgatory ?

A. Those souls go to Purgatory that depart this life in *venial* sin ; or that have not fully paid the debt of *temporal* punishment due to those sins, of which the guilt has been forgiven.

Q. What do you mean by temporal punishment ?

A. By temporal punishment I mean punishment which will have an end, either in this world or the world to come.

The catechism here tells us that there are two classes of souls which go to Purgatory, those *which depart this life in unforgiven venial sin*, and those *which have not fully paid the debt of temporal punishment due to the Justice of God for those sins, mortal or venial, of which the guilt has been forgiven*. For you must know that when God for-

gives the *guilt* of a sin, he does not always remit the whole of the *punishment*. The principal punishment due to every mortal sin, namely, the eternal flames of hell, he always forgives when he forgives the sin and restores the soul to his grace; for no one can be at the same time a child of God and a child of hell. But, as a good father, when he forgives a child, often inflicts some slight punishment, partly as an atonement for the fault committed, and partly as a warning for the future, so does Almighty God, in forgiving us the guilt and eternal punishment of sin, usually leave upon us some lesser chastisement to be endured either in this life or in Purgatory. This punishment is called *temporal*, because it will end after a time; while that which will never end, namely, the punishment of hell, is called *eternal*. In reading the sacred history, you will find many instances of the infliction of this temporal punishment upon the repentant sinner after the guilt and eternal punishment had been forgiven by God. Thus Adam, our first parent, having grievously offended God by eating the forbidden fruit, became afterwards, as is commonly believed, a sincere penitent; yet the sentence remained unchanged, that in labour and toil he should eat his bread all the days of his life until he returned to the dust out of which he was taken (Gen. iii. 17-19). Moses, in punishment of some little want of confidence in God, was, though a special favourite of heaven, forbidden to set foot on the promised land, after which he had so ardently sighed (Deut. xxxii. 48, &c.). In like manner the whole nation of the Israelites, who had come out of Egypt, were, in punishment of their repeated murmurings, condemned by God to perish in the desert (Num. xiv. 29, &c.), though there is little doubt that many among them repented and were in the end saved. Again, in the history of King David, we find that, when he had fallen into the sin of pride in numbering his people, the prophet Nathan was sent by God to announce to him that, though his sin was pardoned on account of his sincere repentance, yet he must choose one of these three scourges, war, famine, or pestilence, as some atonement to the Justice of God (2 Kings xxiv. 13).

From these examples, my dear children, we plainly see that Almighty God, in-forgiving the guilt of sin, often leaves some temporal punishment to be endured. But as death may easily cut us off before we have discharged the debt we owe him, he has mercifully provided us with the means of satisfying his Divine Justice in the other life, namely, by the temporal sufferings of Purgatory.

Q. How do you prove that there is a Purgatory?

A. I prove that there is a Purgatory from the constant teaching of the Church, and from the doctrine of Holy Scripture, which declares that God will render to every man according to his works ; that nothing defiled shall enter heaven ; and that some will be saved "yet so as by fire" (Matt. xvi. 27 ; Apoc. xxi. 27 ; 1 Cor. iii. 15).

This answer, my dear children, contains the clearest proofs of the existence of Purgatory, derived partly from the constant teaching of the Church and partly from various passages of the Holy Scripture. As for ourselves, we have no need of proofs either of Purgatory or of any other doctrine that is taught us by the Church, for we know that the Holy Ghost abides always with her, teaching her all things, and that she cannot go astray or lead us into error. But as it may sometimes be our duty to show to others who are not of the true Faith, how exactly the teaching of the Church agrees with the doctrine of Jesus Christ and his Apostles, therefore the catechism puts before us certain proofs of the existence of Purgatory which will make it very easy for you to give an answer to any one who questions you on the subject.

In the first place, then, we prove that there is a Purgatory from the constant teaching of the Church. What the Church has always taught, must come down from the Apostles and Jesus Christ himself. Now there never has been a time when the existence of Purgatory was not believed and prayers and Masses offered for the repose of the souls of the departed in the Catholic Church. This is clearly seen from the inscriptions in the Catacombs (the earliest burial places of the Christians), from the writings of the Fathers, and from the prayers appointed to be used in the Holy Mass and the Divine Office. It is plain

therefore that the doctrine of Purgatory is as old as the Catholic Church, in other words, that it is a truth revealed by Jesus Christ to the first pastors of the Church, namely, to the Apostles themselves.

Secondly, if the doctrine of Purgatory be clearly proved, as I have shown, from the constant tradition of the Church, it is no less plainly established from the words of Holy Scripture. The catechism mentions three distinct proofs of Purgatory taken from the Sacred Writings. I will explain them to you one by one.

In the first place, the Holy Scripture teaches us in many places *that God will render to every man according to his works*. Thus our B. Lord himself, in speaking of his coming at the last Judgment, says, "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his Angels, and then will he render to every man according to his works." But what, you will ask, have these words to do with purgatory, of which no mention is here made? A great deal, my dear children, as you will soon see. For if Almighty God will render to every man according to his works, it is plain that those who have committed lesser or venial sins, will not meet with the same punishment as those who have committed mortal or grievous ones. Now we know that those who die in the guilt of mortal sin are condemned without hope to eternal punishment. What, then, will become of those who die in lesser or venial sin? Into heaven they certainly cannot enter until they have satisfied the Justice of God; but, at the same time, we cannot suppose that an infinitely Good God will condemn them for these lesser faults to the eternal flames of hell. Let us suppose, for example, that one man has murdered a fellow-creature, and that another has stolen an apple; moreover, that they both die without receiving pardon for the sin they have committed. Can we suppose for a moment that the man who has stolen an apple only, will be condemned to the same eternal place of torments as he who has committed the heinous crime of murder? If this were so, God would not be rendering to every man *according to his works*, which we know from Holy Scripture that he does,

and which his Justice indeed requires. Hence it clearly follows that there must be some middle place between heaven and hell, where he, who dies in the guilt of lesser sin, may be able to discharge the debt of punishment which he owes to God, and so enter into the everlasting joys of Paradise. That there is such a middle place the Church teaches us, and we call it Purgatory.

In the second place, the Scripture teaches us *that nothing defiled shall enter heaven*. For heaven is the abode of God, who is Holiness itself, and of those pure spirits, the Angels, who ever minister at his throne. But which of us, even though he be not stained with the black guilt of mortal sin, has not some lesser stain of sin upon his soul, sufficient to render him unworthy to enter into that pure and holy abode? We know, indeed, that there are some happy souls who, at their death, have been found worthy of immediate admission into the company of the Blessed; the Martyrs, for example, who, by the generous sacrifice of their lives for Jesus Christ, have, as the Holy Scripture expresses it, washed their garments in the blood of the Lamb of God. In like manner many holy Confessors of the faith, Bishops, monks, and hermits, virgins, and widows, and other Saints of God, have, for their patient sufferings and heroic virtues, been deemed worthy of the same privilege. But, alas, all are not Saints, even of those whom we commonly call good and holy! It stands to reason, therefore, since we cannot suppose that a Good and Merciful God will condemn to eternal flames those who are stained with these lesser sins and imperfections, and since, on the other hand, Holy Scripture assures us that no one defiled can enter into the pure abode of the Blessed, that there must be some other place, where the soul may be purified by suffering, and so rendered worthy to be admitted into the presence of God and the company of the Saints. This place of purification is commonly called Purgatory.

Finally, the Holy Scripture says, *that some will be saved, yet so as by fire*. What fire is it that is here spoken of? It is plain that it is not an earthly fire, for

St. Paul is here speaking of the judgment passed by God on our actions after death. Neither is it the fire of hell, since that will not save any one, but will burn for ever him that is thrown therein. It follows, therefore, that it must be the fire, or sufferings of purgatory, which, as fire purifies gold or silver from any baser metal that is mixed with it, so cleanses the soul from the dross of sin, and makes it worthy to shine in the Heavenly Jerusalem.

You see, then, my dear children, that it is evident from Holy Scripture, that there is a place after death where the soul is purified from sin, which is the meaning of the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory.

We read in the acts of the martyrdom of St. Perpetua, who was put to death for the Faith about two hundred years after Christ, a beautiful account of a vision with which she was favoured by our B. Lord, respecting her deceased brother. As this vision shows us how the prayers which we offer for the dead serve both to relieve their sufferings and to hasten their release from Purgatory, I will now relate it to you as it was told by St. Perpetua herself to the companions of her martyrdom.

#### VISION OF ST. PERPETUA.

"A few days after receiving sentence, when we were all together in prayer, I happened to name Dinocrates, at which I was astonished, because I had not before had him in my thoughts; and I that moment knew that I ought to pray for him. This I began to do with great fervour and sighing before God, and the same night I had the following vision. I saw Dinocrates coming out of a dark place, where there were many others, exceedingly hot and thirsty. His face was dirty, his complexion pale, with the ulcer in his face, of which he died at seven years of age. There seemed a great distance between him and me, so that it was impossible for us to come to each other. Near him stood a vessel full of water, whose brim was higher than the stature of an infant. He attempted to drink, but, though he had water, he could not reach it. This mightily grieved me, and I awoke. By this I knew that my brother was in pain, but I trusted I could by prayer relieve him; so I began to pray for him, beseeching God with tears, day and night, that he would grant me my request, as I continued to do till we were removed to the camp prison, being destined for a public show on the festival of the Emperor. The day we were in the stocks I had this vision. I saw the place, which I had beheld dark before, now full of light, and Dinocrates, with his body very clean

and well clad, refreshing himself ; and, instead of his wound, a scar only. I awaked, and I knew he was relieved from his pain."

St. Perpetua, a few days after finished her course by a glorious martyrdom, and soon, no doubt, had the happiness of embracing her little brother, whose sufferings she had relieved by her prayers, and whose happy release from Purgatory she had hastened.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

#### ST. MALACHY AND HIS SISTER.

Eight hundred years ago, there sat in the See of Armagh a holy Bishop named St. Malachy, who was remarkable for his great charity and his special compassion for the poor souls in Purgatory. Now it happened that he had a sister who was given to a worldly life and was fond of pleasure, vanity and dress. Often had her saintly brother reproved her for her folly, exhorting her to think seriously of her soul, but all his efforts were to no purpose. At length she died, and for some days St. Malachy offered the Holy Sacrifice and earnest prayers for her repose, until at length the distraction of so many important duties banished the remembrance of her from his mind.

Thus a month passed by, at the end of which St. Malachy heard in his sleep a voice saying, "Behold, your sister is waiting in great grief within the Churchyard, and has been thirty days without spiritual refreshment !" The Archbishop, awaking, pondered on the meaning of these words, and remembering that it was now thirty days since he had given up praying for his sister, immediately offered the Holy Mass for her repose, continuing the same for many days. A short time after, he beheld her in his sleep standing at the door of the church ; she was clothed in black garments, and was unable to obtain an entrance. St. Malachy redoubled his prayers, and a few days after, he saw her clad in half mourning and admitted within the doors of the church, though as yet unable to approach the altar. Finally, after many and fervent prayers he beheld her clad in white garments, in the midst of a glorious company habited like herself, and admitted into the very sanctuary. Thereby he knew that the holy sacrifices and prayers which he had offered for her had been accepted by God, and that her soul had found relief.

This history is recorded by the great St. Bernard, who was an intimate friend of St. Malachy and wrote his life.—*Rohrbacher, Vies des Saints.*

The doctrine of Purgatory, and that of praying for the dead, which necessarily follows from it, are two of the most consoling truths of our holy faith. That religion must, indeed, be dreary and desolate, in which it is taught that those dear friends, who are torn from us by death, can no longer be helped by our prayers, and if not

sufficiently pure to be admitted at once into the presence of God, are condemned for ever to be banished from his sight. The history which I am going to relate to you will confirm the truth of what I say.

#### A PROTESTANT CONVERTED BY THE DOCTRINE OF PURGATORY.

A certain young man, a Protestant, residing in Scotland, had a brother whom he tenderly loved, but who was cut off by a premature death. He was deeply afflicted at so severe a loss, and refused all consolation. What grieved him particularly were the fears for his brother's salvation, which perpetually haunted his mind. He could not bear to think that his brother was eternally lost, and yet, when he considered the Holiness of God and the perfect purity required for admission into heaven, he was filled with the deepest anxiety. To divert his mind he undertook, at the advice of his friends and physician, a journey to the Continent. Providence had so arranged that a Catholic priest sailed with him in the same vessel, and, on landing, lodged at the same hotel. The priest and the young Scotchman were frequently thrown together, and conversed on various subjects, till at last the young man revealed to his new friend the cause of his secret uneasiness. The priest endeavoured to console him, and spoke to him of the doctrine of Purgatory and the Catholic practice of praying for the dead. "Oh!" exclaimed the youth, "if I were only able to pray for my brother, I should feel my heart relieved; never would I pass a day without offering up my petitions to God for one whom I loved so tenderly upon earth." This conversation made a deep impression upon the young man, and led him to inquire into the other doctrines of the Church. These inquiries soon removed his early prejudices, and a short time after he became a Catholic.—*Catech. de Persév.*

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#### FOURTEENTH INSTRUCTION.

*Tenth Article—The Forgiveness of Sin—Means of Forgiveness—Nature of Sin—Original Sin—The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

Q. What is the tenth article of the Creed?

A. The tenth article of the Creed is "The forgiveness of sins."

Q. What is meant by "The forgiveness of sins?"

A. By "the forgiveness of sins" is meant that Christ left to the Pastors of his Church the power of *forgiving sins* (John xx. 23).

We come now, my dear children, to a very consoling



article of the Apostles' Creed, namely, *the forgiveness of sins*. By this article we mean that Jesus Christ has *left to the Pastors of his Church the power of forgiving sins*, and that every poor sinner who applies to them in the manner which He has appointed, can obtain forgiveness. This article comes naturally after the ninth article, which speaks of the Catholic Church, inasmuch as the power of forgiving sins is one of the most glorious privileges of the Church of God. When our B. Lord lived upon earth, he himself forgave in person the sins of those who came to him with proper dispositions. You remember, I am sure, the beautiful history of St. Mary Magdalen coming to Jesus through the midst of the guests, as he sat at table in the house of Simon the Pharisee, and how she threw herself at his feet, watered them with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. Our dear Lord did not send her away without her reward. When the Pharisees murmured at him for permitting so great a sinner to approach him, he took up her defence, and after rebuking her accusers, turned to her with a look of tender compassion, and said to her, "Thy sins are forgiven thee" (Luke vii. 37, &c.). Then again, when the poor paralytic was let down to him through the roof of the house on account of the great throng, Jesus said to him in like manner, "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee" (Matt. ix. 2, &c.).

It was not, however, the Will of God that his Divine Son should remain always visibly upon earth; and as our B. Lord desired all to be saved—those who should be born in after ages, as well as those who lived in the world in his own lifetime—shortly before he ascended into heaven he appeared to his Apostles and bestowed on them the same power of forgiving sins which he himself had exercised while among men. "As the Father hath sent me," said he to them, "I also send you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained" (John xx. 21-23). This wonderful power, having been granted by Christ to his Church for the benefit of mankind in all times and in all places, has been handed down by

the Apostles to those who succeed them in their sacred office, namely, *the Bishops and Priests of the Church*. It is to them, therefore, as the ministers of Christ, that we must have recourse to obtain that pardon which our B. Lord has purchased for us at the price of his Precious Blood.

Q. By what means are sins forgiven ?

A. Sins are forgiven principally by Baptism and Penance.

You see now, my dear children, that Jesus Christ has left in his Church the power of forgiving sin, and that he has placed this power in the hands of the Pastors of the Church, namely, the Bishops and Priests, to be exercised by his authority and in his name. But, notice, it is not every one whose sins are pardoned ; those only obtain this forgiveness who make use of the means which our B. Lord has appointed for the purpose. These means are *principally* the Holy Sacraments of *Baptism and Penance*, by which the Precious Blood of Jesus, which is the source of all grace and pardon, is applied to our souls to wash out from them the stains of sin. Thus Baptism forgives us the sin of our first parents, in which we were all born, and Penance the sins which we commit ourselves.

But why do we say that sins are forgiven *principally* by Baptism and Penance ? Are there any other means by which we may obtain pardon ? Yes, in certain cases ; but these two Sacraments are the chief and most important means. For example, we can obtain pardon for lesser sins by an act of true sorrow, and even for greater sins, if our sorrow be from the love of God and we have the desire and intention of going to Confession as soon as we are able. Then there is the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, which we receive when we are dangerously ill, and which forgives the remains of sin that may perhaps be left on the soul after it has been purified by the Sacrament of Penance ; and there are other means, too, which you will come to know later. Thus has our B. Lord, like a good physician, mercifully provided a remedy for all the wounds and diseases of our souls.

But tell me, my dear children, are there not some sins

too great to be forgiven by God, and some sinners whose crimes are so enormous that they have no reason to hope for pardon? No, most certainly not. When we say that we believe in *the forgiveness of sins*, we mean in the forgiveness of *every* sin, however great, if only we truly repent of it; for there is no limit to God's mercy, and there is no sin so black that it cannot be washed away with the Blood of the Son of God. Listen, and I will tell you a beautiful story, which shows us that God never refuses to receive the greatest sinner, if he be truly penitent.

#### THE HERMIT AND THE ROBBER.

A certain hermit, who had lived for many years in great reputation for sanctity, began at length to entertain dangerous thoughts of self-complacency. Filled with these temptations, he was setting out one morning to visit a neighbouring church, when he beheld, seated on the banks of the river which flowed past his little cell, a poor man, who appeared to be weeping bitterly. On approaching him he perceived that the afflicted man was a notorious robber, the terror of the surrounding country. The hermit was about to retrace his steps, when the man advanced to meet him, threw himself at his feet, confessed his crimes, and begged to know if he might ever hope for pardon. The hermit, astonished and shocked at hearing the recital of so many enormous sins, and, comparing them with his own innocent and blameless life, began to swell with pride, and, in tones of indignation, exclaimed, "Dost *thou* hope for pardon, thou wicked sinner? Sooner shall roses bloom upon this dry staff, than a Just God grant forgiveness to such sins as thine!" So saying, he turned away, leaving the poor sinner on the brink of despair.

The hermit had not proceeded far when the staff which he carried in his hand became rooted in the ground. He endeavoured to pull it out, but it resisted all his efforts, and became every moment more firmly seated in the soil. Then he beheld bud, and leaf, and flower sprouting forth, until at last the dry stick was laden with beautiful roses; and at the same time he heard a voice whispering, "Sooner shall roses bloom on the barren staff than a Good God refuse mercy to the repenting sinner or grant it to the proud one." Filled with shame and contrition, the hermit fell on his knees, and, with many tears, begged pardon for his sin; then, rising, he once more endeavoured to release his staff. This time it yielded to his grasp, and, bearing it in his hand, he returned in haste to the spot where he had left the robber. "See, brother," said he, showing him the staff all covered with roses, "the wonder which God has worked to convince *me* of my fault and *you* of his tender Mercy. Fear not, then, lest God should refuse to pardon you. In the Church he has left an

abundant fountain of grace, his Precious Blood, in which he who sincerely repents may wash away the blackest crimes. Come, then, with me to my cell, that together we may avail ourselves of this means of grace, and bewail our sins for the rest of our lives." Much comforted, the robber dried his tears, and followed the hermit to his cell. Here they planted the staff before the door, and it grew into a beautiful tree, the sight of which served as a continual encouragement to persevere in a spirit of humility and firm hope in the Divine Mercy.—*The Little Flower Garden.*

Q. What is sin ?

A. Sin is an offence against God, by any thought, word, deed, or omission against the law of God.

Sin, my dear children, is *an offence against God*. It is a rising up or rebellion of the creature against the God that made him. It is a deliberate outrage against the Holy Law, that is to say, the commandments, which God has given to man, and by which he makes known to us his Divine Will. And, as this outrage may be committed either by thought, by word, by deed, or by omitting some duty prescribed, therefore the catechism adds, *by any thought, word, deed, or omission against the law of God*. From this you see that the guilt of sin consists in the *act of the will* refusing to obey what we believe to be the command of God. Hence it sometimes happens that a person is guilty of sin in doing what is not really against the law of God. For example, if he wilfully and without excuse did servile work on Saturday, believing through some mistake that it was Sunday, he would commit sin ; while on the other hand if he worked on Sunday, taking it to be Saturday, he would commit no sin, because he had no desire to break God's Law. Notice this well, my dear children, that the malice of sin does not consist in the thing done, but in the act of the will rebelling against the Divine Command.

You have often heard say that sin is a great, a terrible evil. This is most true ; and, indeed, it is the only real evil in the world, because death, sickness, poverty, and other things which we consider evils, if taken rightly, are no longer evils, but become to us a great source of good. Moreover, all these things would have no existence if it were not for sin—they spring from sin, being either the

punishment or consequences of sin. But why is it, you will ask, that sin is itself such an evil? Listen and I will tell you, for the better you understand how ugly and detestable it is, the greater care will you take to avoid it.

In the first place, he who commits sin rises up in rebellion against the Almighty God and refuses to obey him. God commands him, for example, not to steal, and the sinner answers, "*I will* steal in spite of the command of God." God commands him to hear Mass upon Sunday, and he answers, "*I will not* hear Mass, though God orders me to do so." And yet, at the same time, the sinner knows that he is the creature of God, made by the hand of God out of the dust of the earth, and therefore bound to serve and obey him. He knows that he owes all that he has to the Goodness of God, his very being and existence, the food that he eats, the clothes he puts on, the very air he breathes. He knows, moreover, that all that God orders him is just and reasonable, and that God promises him eternal happiness if he will obey him. Nevertheless, the sinner, knowing all this, flies in the face of God, and says, if not in words, at least in deeds, that he will not do what God tells him. Can you imagine a blacker and baser ingratitude than sin?

In the second place, you will understand better how black and ugly a monster sin is, when I tell you that all that man of himself could do to atone for sin would not be able to make satisfaction for or blot out the guilt even of the smallest sin. For example, not all the tears of the whole world could of themselves wash away the guilt of a bad word, an angry blow, or a little lie of excuse. No, my dear children, not even all the torments of the martyrs, nor all the sufferings that have been or could be endured by man from the beginning of the world till the day of judgment, would of themselves be sufficient to atone for the smallest sin. And why? Because sin is an offence against *God*, and God is so Great, so Holy, and so Pure, that it requires nothing less than the sufferings and blood of God himself to atone for it. It is for this reason that the ever Blessed Son of God, equal to his Father in all

things, became man and died a cruel death upon the cross, that he might make proper atonement for our sins, and wash them out with his own most Precious Blood. It is true, indeed, that our works of penance, our prayers also, and our sufferings, all help to obtain our pardon from God; but it is only on account of the Precious Blood and cruel sufferings of our Divine Redeemer that they are able to do so. How black and deadly an evil, then, must sin be, which can only be blotted out with the blood of a God!

Thirdly, it is sin, and sin only, which has brought every evil into the world. Disease, suffering, and death are the punishment of sin. The crosses and afflictions which fall upon us in this world are sent by God to enable us to make satisfaction for our sins before the day of Judgment, when the Justice of God would condemn us to a much severer punishment. Finally, it is sin that has lit up the fire of purgatory, and the still more awful flames of hell, which will for ever feed upon the sins of men. Let us, then, always look upon sin as the worst of evils that can befall us, and avoid it as we would do an armed murderer or a pestilence. "Flee from sins," says the Holy Scripture, "as from the face of a serpent; for if thou comest near them, they will take hold of thee. The teeth thereof are the teeth of a lion, killing the souls of men. All iniquity is like a two-edged sword" (Ecclus. xxi. 2-4).

Q. How many kinds of sin are there?

A. There are two kinds of sin, original sin and actual sin.

Q. What is original sin?

A. Original sin is that guilt and stain of sin which we inherit from Adam, who was the origin and head of all mankind.

Q. What was the sin committed by Adam?

A. The sin committed by Adam was the sin of disobedience when he ate the forbidden fruit.

Your catechism tells you that *there are two kinds of sin, original and actual*. Original sin is *that which we inherit from Adam, who, being the first man created by God, from whom all others are sprung, is the origin and head of all mankind*; actual sin is *that which we ourselves commit*, for example, when we steal, quarrel, tell lies, &c. Ori-

*ginal* sin is so called because it is the first sin that was ever committed, and is the cause and origin of every other sin. The name of *actual* is given to all other sins, because they are committed by our own act, and do not come down to us from another. Let us now see how it was that man was first so unhappy as to fall into sin, that is to say, how it was that *original* sin came into the world.

I told you, my dear children, that when God created Adam and Eve, he placed them in the beautiful garden of paradise, and there provided for all their wants, promising that, if they continued good, he would, after a certain time, take them to himself in heaven without dying, there to fill up the places of the fallen angels. But, first of all, his Divine Justice required that, by their obedience, they should prove themselves worthy of the happiness he had in store for them. He accordingly laid on them one command, a very easy one you will think. It was simply not to eat of the fruit of one of the trees in the garden, which was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Almighty God told them, at the same time, how much depended on their obedience to this command, and that, if they disobeyed him, they should not only lose all that he had promised them, but should *die* in punishment of their crime.

At first Adam and Eve did everything as God had told them. They had plenty of delicious fruits to eat, and they never thought for a moment of disobeying the good God who had made them, and whom they knew to be so worthy of their love and obedience. At length, however, the devil, who was one of the wicked angels who had rebelled against God, and had been cast down into hell in punishment of their crime, envying the happiness which he saw Adam and Eve enjoying, and burning with rage at the thought that God intended them and their descendants to fill those glorious places in heaven which he and his companions had lost by sin, determined to get them to sin likewise, and so to draw on them the anger and punishments of God. He accordingly entered, with God's permission, into the body of a serpent, and came and took up his place near the tree on which hung the forbidden fruit.

Soon after Eve passed by, and the devil, seeing her, thus addressed her :—

“How is it, O Eve, that God does not allow you to eat of the delicious fruits that hang on the trees in this garden?”

You see that the devil began, according to his custom, by telling Eve a big lie, for God had not forbidden them to eat of any of the fruits, except one. Eve, who might have known at once from the insolent language of the devil and his wicked lie, that it was an enemy of God who had come to tempt her, should have run away at once from so dangerous a companion. On the contrary, she foolishly trusted to her own strength, and stopped to argue with the devil, and show him that he was wrong.

“You are wrong,” she said; “God *does* allow us to eat of the fruits which grow in this garden, and it is only the fruit of this one tree which he has forbidden us to eat of, lest we die.”

“You are mistaken,” replied the devil. “It is not *lest you should die*, that God has forbidden you to eat of this fruit, but lest, by eating of it, you should become like gods, having the knowledge of good and evil.”

Foolish Eve listened attentively to the cunning words of the tempter; her vanity was flattered at the thought of becoming like God himself, and she began to have an eager longing for the fruit, which hung in delicious clusters before her eyes. At length she stretched forth her hand, and plucked, and eat of it; and, having done so, sought out in haste her husband Adam, and persuaded him to become the partner of her guilt, and to eat of it in like manner.

No sooner was the crime committed than punishment followed. Almighty God, in a terrible voice, summoned the guilty pair before him, and, with fear and trembling, they obeyed his call. In vain they sought to excuse themselves; Adam laid all the blame upon Eve, and Eve upon the devil; but God, who saw the guilt of each, was not to be deceived, and passed upon them the terrible sentence which they had so justly deserved.



“And the Lord God said to the serpent, *Because thou hast done this thing, thou art cursed among all the beasts of the earth ; upon thy breast shalt thou go, and earth shalt thou eat, all the days of thy life. I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed ; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.*

“To the woman also he said, *I will multiply thy sorrows and thy conceptions ; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thou shalt be under thy husband's power, and he shall have dominion over thee.*

“And to Adam he said, *Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work : with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken, for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.*”

Almighty God then drove them out of paradise, and placed an angel at the entrance, with a flaming sword, to prevent their return (Gen. iii.).

Thus, my dear children, “did sin enter into the world, and by sin death” (Rom. v. 12), the twofold death of the body and of the soul. For if Adam had not sinned, and we also had preserved our innocence, we should, by eating of the tree of life which God had placed in the garden of Eden, have been preserved continually in health and strength, and finally have passed without dying from the earthly to the heavenly paradise. But worse than this by far was the death of the soul, by which Adam and all his descendants became enemies of God ; and were it not for the Sacrament of Baptism, which our B. Saviour has mercifully provided for us, and which washes us from original sin and makes us once more children of God and heirs of heaven, this spiritual death would have prevented us from ever entering into the presence of God and the company of the angels. Besides all this, our souls, by original sin, have become darkened with ignorance, so that we are far less capable of knowing and understanding the

truths of religion, and indeed of acquiring any knowledge, than Adam was when first created. Moreover, that other power of the soul, which is called the will, has been weakened and corrupted ; so that we are born with an inclination to evil rather than to good, and have continually to do violence to ourselves to overcome our passions and evil inclinations. All this is the unhappy consequence of that black stain of original sin which comes down to us from our first parents.

#### THE WOODCUTTER AND HIS WIFE.

A certain king, who had lost his way in hunting, was endeavouring to regain the path, when he heard voices at a little distance. On approaching, he found that it was a poor woodcutter and his wife, who were talking together at their work.

"It must be owned," said the woman, "that mother Eve was very greedy to eat the apple. If she had only done as God told her, we should have no need to work and slave as we do now."

"If Eve was greedy," replied the man, "Adam was a fool to do as she bade him. If I had been in his place and you had come to me with the apple, I would have given you a box on the ear and sent you about your business."

Scarcely had he spoken these words, when the king came up. "Good people," said he, "you seem to work very hard." "Yes, sir," answered they, for they did not know that it was the king ; "we work like slaves from morning till night, and yet can hardly gain a living." "If you will come and live with me," said the king, "I will support you both without working." At the same moment the attendants of the king came up, and the poor woodcutters were greatly surprised and no less rejoiced at their unexpected adventure.

The king, as he had promised, took them to his palace, where he gave them splendid apartments, rich dresses, a carriage, horses, and servants in livery. During the first month the time passed very happily. Every day they had twelve dishes at table, and on the last day they had twenty. In the middle of the table was a large dish with a cover upon it. The woman, being very curious, put out her hand to uncover it, but one of the king's servants checked her, and told her that the king had given strict orders that that dish should on no account be touched.

As soon as the servants left the room, the woodcutter, perceiving that his wife was very melancholy and ate nothing, asked her what ailed her. She replied that she would not give a pin for all the fine things on the table, but she longed for a bit out of the covered dish. "Foolish woman," said her husband, "did you not hear that the king has forbidden us to touch it?" "The king is very unreasonable," said the woman. "If he would not have us see what is in the dish, he should not have ordered it to be put on the table." At

the same time she began to cry, saying that her husband did not love her, and that she would kill herself if he would not uncover the dish.

The woodcutter felt moved when he saw his wife cry, and, as he loved her dearly, he told her that he would do anything to please her, if she would not make herself unhappy. So saying, he lifted up the cover from the dish, when out jumped a little white mouse, which scampered away in an instant. They both ran after it, but, before they could catch it, the king came in, and gravely asked them what had become of the mouse. "Please your majesty," said the man, who, as you may suppose, looked very foolish, "my wife teased me so long to see what was in the dish, that I could not help uncovering it, and the mouse has got away." "Oh, oh!" replied the king. "You said some time ago that if you had been Adam, you would have given Eve a box on the ear for being curious and greedy; you should have remembered your resolution. And you, silly woman; you had everything here that you could possibly wish for, but all was not enough; you must needs, like Eve, taste the forbidden fruit. Go, foolish people; return to your labour in the forest, and never again blame Adam and Eve for the hardships you endure, since you have been guilty of the very same folly."—*Mrs. Herbert.*

**Q.** Have all mankind contracted the guilt and stain of original sin?

**A.** Yes; all mankind have contracted the guilt and stain of original sin, except the Blessed Virgin, who, through the merits of her Divine Son, was conceived without the least guilt or stain of original sin.

**Q.** What is this privilege of the Blessed Virgin called?

**A.** This privilege of the Blessed Virgin is called the Immaculate Conception.

All mankind, except the B. Virgin Mary, have inherited from Adam the guilt and stain of original sin with its fatal consequences both of soul and body. Mary alone, by a special privilege granted to her who was chosen among all women to be the mother of the God Incarnate, *was conceived without the least guilt or stain of original sin.* This great grace was given to our B. Lady *through the merits of her Son*; for the Passion and Death of our Lord are the source of all grace, and all the favours which have been ever bestowed by God on any of the Saints, or on the B. Virgin herself, have been merited for them by our Saviour's bitter Passion and cruel death.

You will now see what is the meaning of a word which you have often heard, but perhaps never properly under-

stood; I mean the *Immaculate Conception* of the B. Virgin. It means the special grace by which Mary alone, of all mankind, was in her very Conception preserved from the stain of Adam's sin. This is one of the most glorious privileges of our Lady; it was a more happy thing for her never to have been the enemy of God by sin, than even for her to have been chosen to be his Mother. It was not, indeed, fitting that she, who was to bring into the world the God of all Holiness, should ever be defiled with the least stain of sin, or be displeasing to Him whom she was to bring forth. We could not for a moment suppose this possible, even if the Church did not teach us that Mary was conceived Immaculate. Such, however, has always been the belief of the Catholic Church; and, not many years ago, the saintly Pope Pius IX. solemnly declared in a vast assembly of Bishops from all parts of the world, that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the B. Virgin Mary is an article of Catholic faith, and that no one can call it in question without becoming a heretic and being cut off from the Communion of the Church.

I earnestly recommend you, my dear children, to have a great devotion to the Immaculate Conception of our B. Lady, and frequently to honour your heavenly Mother under this title. This you do when you thank God for this great grace which he has bestowed upon her, or when you ask some favour of God for the sake of her Immaculate Conception, and especially when you keep from sin in honour of her perfect freedom from all sin, both original and actual. I would advise you also to wear always about your necks the medal of Mary Immaculate, which is commonly called the Miraculous Medal, and in moments of temptation to repeat the little prayer engraved upon it, "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us, who have recourse to thee." You will find this little ejaculation of immense help in enabling you to overcome the attacks of the devil.

But there is one grace above all others, which you should ask of God through the merits of the Immaculate Virgin. I mean the great grace of holy purity, that virtue

which Mary loves so well, and which, if you love it too, will make you such special favourites of your Blessed Mother. For this intention, you might say, according to the advice of St. Alphonsus, and the example of many servants of God, three Hail Marias, before retiring to rest, in honour of this mystery. And you might sometimes repeat for the same intention, this beautiful prayer, to which an indulgence is attached: "By thy sacred Virginity and Immaculate Conception, O most pure Virgin and Queen of Angels! obtain for me purity of soul and body."

I have spoken to you of the Miraculous Medal which we wear in honour of the Immaculate Mother of God. Listen and I will tell you how it was that it first came into use among the faithful.

#### THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL

In the month of September, 1830, a novice of the Sisters of Charity was praying in the church before the altar, when she suddenly beheld suspended in the air a picture of the Blessed Virgin. On gazing upon it, she saw that our Lady was clothed in a robe of pure white, with a mantle of silvery blue; her hands were stretched open towards the earth, but appeared covered with diamonds, from which rays of extraordinary brightness shone in all directions. At the same time she heard a voice saying, "These rays are the symbols of the graces which Mary obtains for man." Around the picture the following words were written in letters of gold: "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us, who have recourse to thee." In a few moments the picture was reversed, and on the other side she saw the letter "M," surmounted by a cross, and underneath the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Presently the voice again spoke, commanding that a medal should be struck according to the pattern shown her, and declaring that whoever should wear that medal indulgenced, should enjoy the special protection of the Mother of God.

The novice, on the following day, related the vision to her confessor, who, fearing lest it should be the effect of her imagination, told her to dismiss it from her thoughts, and take no notice of what had happened. The humble novice obeyed, but in a few months the vision was repeated. This time also the confessor told her to pay no attention to it. A third time, however, the same vision appeared to her, and on this occasion the voice added that the B. Virgin was displeased that the medal had not been struck.

The confessor, being now at a loss how to act, related the whole affair to the Archbishop of Paris, who immediately gave the neces-

sary permission, adding that a practice so likely to promote devotion to the B. Virgin could hardly come from an evil source.

Since that time the use of the Miraculous Medal has become very general among the faithful, and innumerable instances are related of the special graces, both spiritual and temporal, which have everywhere been the result.—*The Graces of Mary.*

## FIFTEENTH INSTRUCTION.

### *Tenth Article concluded—Actual Sin—Mortal and Venial Sin.*

Q. What is actual sin?

A. Actual sin is every sin which we ourselves commit.

Q. How is actual sin divided?

A. Actual sin is divided into mortal sin and venial sin.

You will remember, my dear children, that in our last instruction we were speaking about the sin which was committed by our first parents in the garden of paradise, and which we commonly call *original* sin. I told you that the guilt of that great crime has come down to every child of Adam, covering the soul with a loathsome stain, and that every one is born in it *except the B. Virgin*, who was preserved from it by a special privilege.

We now come to speak of those sins *which we ourselves commit* by our own act and deed, and which we call *actual* sins. These actual sins are, as the catechism says, either *mortal* or *venial*, according as they kill the soul or only render it less pleasing to God. For it is with the soul as it is with the body. There are some wounds which, if they are inflicted on the body, are sure to produce death, for example, if a man be stabbed to the heart or shot through the head; *mortal* sins are like these. But there are other wounds, which only make a person less strong and able to work; for instance, if he gets a cut on the finger or a bruise on the leg. These wounds are like *venial* sins, which do not kill the soul outright, but render it less strong and healthy, less pleasing to God, and less able to do good works. The catechism speaks first of mortal sin.

Q. What is mortal sin ?

A. Mortal sin is a grievous offence against God.

Q. Why is it called mortal sin ?

A. It is called mortal sin because it kills the soul and deserves hell.

Q. How does mortal sin kill the soul ?

A. Mortal sin kills the soul by depriving it of sanctifying grace, which is the supernatural life of the soul.

Q. Is it a great evil to fall into mortal sin ?

A. Yes ; to fall into mortal sin is the greatest of all evils.

Q. Where will they go who die in mortal sin ?

A. They who die in mortal sin will go to hell for all eternity.

Mortal sin is a grievous, that is to say, a "very great" offence against God. In other words, it is doing what we know will displease God very much indeed, and make us lose altogether his grace and friendship. It is called *mortal*, because it kills the soul, for mortal means "that which will kill," or, in other words, "deadly." Now, there are some sins, as I told you, which are like mortal wounds and diseases in the body, because they are so opposed to and displeasing to God, as to deprive the soul altogether of his grace and friendship. The soul then becomes dead in the sight of God, for it is *sanctifying grace*, namely, the grace which makes us holy and pleasing to God, that is *the supernatural life of the soul*. It is true that in the sight of men the soul still appears to be living, since it is still united to the body, and the sinner can think, speak, and act as he could before he fell into sin ; but, for all that, the soul is dead in the sight of God and his angels. You will see from this that the words *supernatural life* mean "that life which we have in the sight of God by being his friends and children ;" our *natural* life is "that which we have in the eyes of men by our souls being still united to our bodies." This last kind of life is of little value compared with the first.

See, then, my dear children, what a dreadful evil mortal sin must be, since he who has committed it carries about in his living body a dead soul, which is hideous and loathsome beyond expression. Which of you would like to carry about a dead body in your arms, and how much less would you like to sleep with it in your beds !

But he who is stained with the guilt of mortal sin *does* carry about with him continually a frightful corpse, namely, his dead soul. Whether he walks or sits, or lies down to sleep, he has it with him in the closest embrace, for it is within his body; nor does it ever leave him, until, by true repentance and a good confession, it is restored to life by recovering the grace of God. It is true that *we* cannot see our souls in this state, and it is well we cannot, for the very sight of them would strike us dead, they are so ugly and frightful; but God sees them, the Blessed Virgin sees them, our Guardian Angels see them, and they are struck with horror at the sight.

But worse than all this, mortal sin makes us enemies of God and children of hell. While we live, the anger of God is for ever stretched over us, and if we die in this state, we fall at once into the eternal flames of hell. Ah! my dear children, have a great horror of mortal sin, which inflicts so many evils on both soul and body. Avoid it as you would the plague of death itself; and if ever you have the unhappiness to fall into it, seek at once the pardon of God by a sincere sorrow and a good confession. Shun carefully the occasions that are likely to lead you into sin, particularly dangerous places of amusement, bad books, and wicked companions.

#### FALL OF THE ANGELS.

Many thousand years ago, before God created Adam and Eve, and placed them in the garden of paradise, he created millions of pure spirits, who are called Angels. These noble beings were endowed by God with many admirable qualities. They were made by him of surpassing beauty, gifted with great power, and had knowledge and intelligence bestowed on them at their creation far beyond what man can hope to attain to. They were created by God to love him and praise him, to be his messengers and carry his commands to every part of the universe, and to enjoy for ever the glory of his presence and the delights of heaven. Before bestowing upon them, however, the eternal possession of these favours, Almighty God put them to a trial, as he afterwards put Adam and Eve to a trial, that they might, by an act of their free will, show themselves worthy of the happiness he intended for them. He laid upon them a command; we do not exactly know the nature of it, but it is commonly thought that it was to adore his Divine Son



made man for our salvation. The greater portion of the Angels gladly embraced this opportunity of showing their love and fidelity to that Good God who had lavished so many favours upon them, and in reward for their obedience, God confirmed them in possession of all the graces he had given them, and bestowed upon them an eternity of happiness. But very many of them unhappily, led by the proud spirit Lucifer, one of the brightest and most glorious of the heavenly host, refused to obey the command of God. So far from adoring the God who made them, clothed in our human nature, they sought themselves to become as gods, and raised aloft the standard of revolt. In an instant the vengeance of the Almighty fell heavily upon their guilty heads. At the command of God, the good Angels, headed by the Archangel St. Michael, hurled down Lucifer with all his followers from their bright thrones in heaven into the bottomless pit of hell, which God created for their eternal punishment. Our B. Lord, in warning his Apostles not to be proud and presumptuous, reminds them of this dreadful fall, when he says, "I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven" (Luke x. 18).

See, my dear children, the dreadful evil of sin, since one single mortal sin turned millions of beautiful Angels into ugly devils, and buried them for ever in the flames of hell.

Q. What is venial sin?

A. Venial sin is an offence which does not kill the soul, yet displeases God, and often leads to mortal sin.

We now come to speak of the other kind of sin which we ourselves commit, namely, *venial sin*. Venial sin, as the catechism says, is *an offence which does not actually kill the soul*, as mortal sin does, but which, nevertheless, *displeases God*. Hence it follows that venial sin is, after mortal sin, the greatest evil that is to be found in the world, since God is offended thereby, a God infinitely Great and Good and Amiable, and worthy of all our love and homage. No evil can for a moment compare with the evil of an offence against Almighty God; it were better that the whole world should be destroyed, than that God should be offended in the smallest point.

But even if we look at ourselves only, we shall easily see how dreadful an evil venial sin is, and that it would be better that any misfortune should befall us, rather than that we should give way to the smallest venial sin. In the first place, it robs us, though not entirely, at least in

part, of the grace and friendship of God. Now there is nothing more precious in the world than the grace of God ; therefore, whatever deprives us of this should justly be considered a lamentable evil. It is true that venial sin does not separate us entirely from God ; it does not drive him altogether from our souls, but it grieves him, puts an obstacle to his grace, and renders him less likely to assist and protect us. Hence it is that persons, who go on committing venial sin wilfully and deliberately, soon fall away into mortal sin. For, not being strengthened and supported by the same powerful grace which God formerly gave them, and which they have gradually lost by their own fault, they easily fall away when a strong temptation comes, and thus lose altogether the friendship of God. Hence you may be sure, when a person falls into some great mortal sin, that it is because he has taken little pains to avoid venial faults.

Another reason which should make us very much afraid of committing venial sin, is the severe punishment which Almighty God inflicts on those who commit it, both in this world and the world to come. Very many of the afflictions which fall upon us in this life, such as pain, sickness, and want, are sent by God as a punishment for our *venial* as well as for our mortal sins ; and as to the sufferings of purgatory, where venial sin is punished after death, they are, as many of the Fathers tell us, far greater than any of the torments and sufferings of this life. Now, supposing that one of you were tempted to steal a penny, and you knew that, if you stole it, you would be thrown into prison or burnt on a slow fire, do you think that you would take it ? Most assuredly you would not. And yet we *do* know that, if we die in the guilt of venial sin, we shall be cast into the prison and burnt in the fire of purgatory. Let us always remember, therefore, when we are tempted to commit venial sin, that God will be sure to punish it either in this life or in the next. Certainly, I would have you to avoid venial sin for a better motive than this, namely, because it offends your Good and Loving God. But as this motive is not always sufficient to touch our hard and stony hearts, it is useful sometimes

to think of his just punishments. For "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. cx. 10).

Q. Why is it called venial sin ?

A. It is called venial sin because it is more easily pardoned than mortal sin.

Venial sin is so called, as the catechism says, *because it is more easily pardoned than mortal sin*. For the word *venial* means "pardonable," being taken from a Latin word which signifies "pardon." It is true that mortal sin is pardonable, too ; but it is, as you may suppose, far more easy to obtain pardon for a sin which only displeases God, than for one which makes us his direct enemies, and separates us entirely from him, as mortal sin does. For the forgiveness of mortal sin, God has, in his Goodness, given us the Sacrament of Penance, in which, by a good confession, joined with a hearty sorrow and the priest's absolution, we may have our sins, however heinous they may be, washed away in the Blood of his Divine Son ; but for the forgiveness of venial sin he has given us many other means besides this Sacrament. Sincere acts of sorrow, acts of the love of God, and works of penance, done with proper dispositions, are some of these means, and help to purify our souls from the lesser faults into which we daily fall.

In saying your night prayers, you are taught to pause for a few moments to make a little examination of conscience, that is to say, to think over the sins you have committed during the day against Almighty God. Then follows the act of sorrow or contrition. You now see that if you say this act with a real sorrow of heart, it will obtain you the pardon of your venial sins ; but you should have, at the same time, a firm resolution of trying to avoid them for the future. This you should try to put in practice next day. If, for example, you have told lies, you should try not to tell them any more ; if you have been angry, you should try to be gentle and kind ; if you have been sulky, to be pleasant and cheerful ; if disobedient, to be willing and docile. But even if you fall the next day into some little fault, you should not lose courage, but try to obtain pardon from God by a good act

of contrition and a firm resolution to do better the day following. If you will persevere in this practice, your faults will gradually become less grievous and fewer in number; your passions will grow daily weaker and weaker; you will be preserved from the danger of falling into mortal sin, and will increase every day in the favour and love of God. Oh, my dear children, how happy will you be if you act in this way! You will then learn by experience how good God is to those who seek him, how sweet and bountiful to those who love him. Believe me, there is no true happiness to be found on earth except in the love and service of so good a God.

#### HISTORY OF JUDAS.

Among the Apostles called by our Lord to be the first Bishops and pillars of his infant Church, was the traitor Judas Iscariot. This unhappy man was entrusted with the care of the purse, in which was placed the money intended to supply the necessary wants of Jesus Christ and his Apostles. Judas, unhappily, had a besetting sin, a bad passion, which he kept carefully concealed within his own breast. He strove to hide it from our Lord himself, but he well knew all that passed in the heart of the wretched man, and would have taught him how to fight against and overcome the temptation had he been willing to own it. Thus it is that a false shame of mentioning our sins and temptations in confession is frequently the cause of the eternal ruin of the soul.

To return to Judas—the fatal passion which led him by degrees to his ruin was an ardent love for money. He kept the purse, and like a miser he gloated over the money that was in it, and began at first to hoard it as if it were his own. He next commenced to pilfer from it little sums to add to his own private store; by and by these sums became larger, and at last he became a confirmed thief. When the penitent Magdalen poured the precious ointment over the feet of our B. Redeemer, Judas took offence, and hypocritically said, “Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?” But “he said this,” the holy Scripture adds, “not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and having the purse, carried the things that were put therein” (John xii. 5, &c.).

Blinded by his passion for money, the wretched man next agreed to betray his Master, his Saviour and his God, into the hands of his blood-thirsty enemies, for the miserable bribe of thirty pieces of silver. Leading a band of ruffians into the Garden of Olives, where our B. Redeemer was weeping for the sins of men at the silent hour of night, Judas, with barefaced effrontery, went up to our Lord and saluted him with a kiss; having previously warned

the Jews, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he, hold him fast" (Matt. xxvi. 48). Wounded to the heart by this base ingratitude, on the part of one whom he had so highly favoured, Jesus tenderly reproached him in these touching words, "Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" (Luke xxii. 48.) After his innocent victim had been condemned to death, the unhappy Judas, stung with remorse, and yielding to despair, put an end to his wicked life by hanging himself with a halter.

See, my dear children, the terrible consequences of venial sin, unchecked and unrepented. His love of money made Judas dishonest, first in little things, then in greater. He became a confirmed thief, a hypocrite, a dissembler. He next became a traitor and a murderer—the murderer of his Saviour and his God. Finally, he became his own murderer, and died in despair.

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## SIXTEENTH INSTRUCTION.

*Eleventh Article—The Resurrection of the Body—Twelfth Article—Life Everlasting—The joys of Heaven—The torments of Hell.*

We read in English History, that when the faith was first preached by St. Paulinus in Northumbria, King Edwin debated for a long time in his own mind whether he should embrace the new faith, or adhere to the idolatrous worship of his forefathers. In his perplexity he called a council of nobles, and after laying the matter before them, invited each to speak his mind. After many had spoken on both sides, there rose up a certain thane who addressed the king as follows:—

"Often, O king, in the depth of the winter, while you are feasting with your thanes and the fire is blazing on the hearth in the midst of the hall, you have seen a bird, pelted by the storm, enter at one door and escape at the other. During its passage it was visible, but whence it came or whither it went, you knew not. Such to me appears the life of man. He walks the earth for a few years, but what precedes his birth or what is to follow his death, we cannot tell. Undoubtedly, if the new religion

can unfold these important secrets, it must be worthy of our attention."

These words of the prudent thane were received with general applause, and were greatly approved by the king. St. Paulinus was accordingly introduced, and invited to explain the doctrines of Christianity. Finally, it was resolved unanimously, that a religion which was able to unfold so clearly the secrets of a future life, must come from God and was worthy of general adoption.

My dear children, it is in the first and in the two last articles of the Creed that God teaches us the important truths which our Saxon forefathers were so eager to learn, namely, whence we came and whither we are going. The first article of the Creed tells us that we come from the hands of God, who created us out of nothing, and placed us in this world to love him and serve him; and the two last articles reveal to us what will become of us when we have passed by death out of sight of our fellow-beings. The Resurrection of the Body—Life Everlasting; these are the two great truths which contain the future history of man after this short mortal life is ended.

Q. What is the eleventh article of the Creed?

A. The eleventh article of the Creed is "The resurrection of the body."

Q. What do you mean by "the resurrection of the body"?

A. By "the resurrection of the body," I mean that we shall all rise again with the same bodies at the day of judgment.

The eleventh article of the Apostles' Creed is the *Resurrection of the body*, by which we mean *that we shall all rise again with the same bodies at the day of general judgment*. Until that day our bodies will lie buried in the earth, and our souls only will, for the time, receive the reward or punishment of their good or evil deeds; but at the last day the body will be again united to the soul, and share for all eternity its reward or punishment. No matter where our bodies shall then be, whether buried in the earth, crumbled to dust, reduced to ashes, or sunk in the depths of the sea, in a moment, at the sound of the trumpet of the great Archangel, they will return to life,

and be gathered together before the judgment-seat of God in the valley of Josaphat.

But though we shall all rise again in the same bodies, yet our bodies will not then have the same look and appearance that they have now. Now, it often happens that a handsome and well-formed body conceals a loathsome and ugly soul, the abode of sin and of unclean spirits; while, on the contrary, an ugly and deformed body frequently hides a soul that is beautiful in the sight of heaven, and in which God himself delights to dwell. But at the day of judgment it will be so no longer. The form and outward appearance of the body will then show forth clearly the state of the soul; for the bodies of the good will be beautiful, glorious, and resplendent with light, while the bodies of the wicked will be ugly, deformed, and frightful to behold. The former will charm and delight every one that sees them, the latter will fill the spectator with horror and disgust.

Oh! my dear children, which do you choose to have at the day of judgment and for all eternity—a body filthy, ugly and loathsome, or one beautiful, brilliant and glorified? The latter, I know; but if so, you must keep your body and soul free from the defilement of sin, for as the body is on earth the partner of the soul in its good and evil deeds, so shall it be for all eternity a partner of its glory or of its disgrace and punishment.

The Apostle St. Paul, in answer to those who ask, in a spirit of incredulity, how it is that “the dead rise again, or with what manner of body they come,” beautifully compares the human body to a grain of wheat, which does not show signs of life until it is first sown or buried in the ground. In a little time the Power of God causes it to spring from the earth, to put out its leaves and stem, and to grow up, watered by the dew of heaven, and warmed by the rays of the sun, until at length it produces the beautiful ear of corn, which, at a proper season, is reaped and gathered into the granary. “So also,” says the Apostle, “is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, it shall rise in glory. It is sown in weakness,

it shall rise in power. It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body. And when this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying which is written, *Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting?*" (1. Cor. xv. 35, &c.).

How consoling are these beautiful words of St. Paul! When we look at it with the eyes of a Christian, that death, which we so much dread, is to the soul that loves God, only the gate into another and happier life, the pledge of a glorious resurrection. The bodies of our parents or dear departed friends, which we follow to the tomb with sorrowful hearts and weeping eyes, are only laid therein to arise one day from thence glorious and immortal, if at least they have died in the grace of God. Hence it is that the Catholic Church shows such respect to the tombs and cemeteries of the dead, blesses and consecrates them with so many beautiful ceremonies, plants on each grave the cross, the symbol of hope, and encourages the living to visit often and deck with flowers and garlands the tombs of their departed friends, and especially to offer up their prayers for the dead on the very spot where their bodies await the moment of their final resurrection.

The holy prophet Ezechiel, one of the Jews who were carried by Nabuchodonosor captives to Babylon, was favoured by God with a wonderful vision, which is a striking figure of the resurrection of all mankind at the last day.

#### VISION OF EZECHIEL.

"The hand of the Lord was upon me," says the prophet, "and brought me forth in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of a plain that was full of bones. And he led me about through them on every side; now they were very many upon the face of the plain, and they were exceeding dry.

"And he said to me, *Son of man, dost thou think these bones shall live?* And I answered, *O Lord God, thou knowest.* And he said to me, *Prophecy concerning these bones, and say to them, 'Ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God to these bones, Behold I will send spirit into you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to grow over you, and will*



*cover you with skin ; and I will give you spirit, and you shall live ; and you shall know that I am the Lord.'*

"And I prophesied as he had commanded me, and the spirit came into them, and they lived ; and they stood up upon their feet an exceeding great army. And he said to me, *Son of man, all these bones are the house of Israel.*"—*Ezech. xxxvii.*

#### THE TWELFTH ARTICLE.

**Q.** What is the twelfth article of the Creed ?

**A.** The twelfth article of the Creed is "Life everlasting."

**Q.** What does "life everlasting" mean ?

**A.** "Life everlasting" means that the good shall live for ever in the glory and happiness of Heaven.

The twelfth and last article of the Apostles' Creed is *Life everlasting*, by which we mean, as the catechism says, *that the good shall live for ever in the glory and happiness of heaven.* This article is placed the last in the Creed, inasmuch as "Life everlasting" is the reward of our belief and the crown of our labours on earth. This short life is, indeed, only a preparation for the long and eternal life on which we shall soon enter. The few years of this mortal life will pass quickly away, but the life which is to come will have no end. In fact, it is for this eternal life that God has made us, and he has only placed us here, as he placed Adam and Eve in the garden of Paradise, to make trial of us, and fit us for the life which is to come. It is by our conduct here that our future lot will be decided. If we lead good and innocent lives, we shall live for ever with Almighty God, enjoying all the delights of heaven ; but if we feed on the forbidden fruit of sin, we shall live only to be punished with the wicked in the flames of hell.

But though all who die in the grace of God will for ever enjoy the happiness of heaven, and all who die in grievous sin will be for ever tormented in hell, do not imagine that all who are saved will be rewarded alike, or that all who are lost will be punished with the same amount of torments. The joys of the Blessed and the punishment of the damned will be in proportion to the number and greatness of their good or evil deeds. Hence St. Paul says, "He that soweth sparingly shall also reap

sparingly, and he who soweth in blessings shall also reap blessings" (2 Cor. ix. 6), that is to say, an abundance of heavenly joys. And in another place, speaking of the glory of the heavenly citizens, he says, "One is the glory of the sun, and another of the moon, and another of the stars" (1 Cor. xv. 41). On the contrary, the Scripture tells us that "the mighty," that is, those who abuse their power and high position, "shall be mightily tormented" (Wisd. vi. 7), in other words, more grievously than the rest of men.

Q. What is the glory and happiness of Heaven?

A. The glory and happiness of Heaven is to see, love, and enjoy God for ever.

Q. What does the Scripture say of the happiness of Heaven?

A. The Scripture says of the happiness of Heaven "that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. ii. 9).

Yes, my dear children, the happiness of Heaven consists in *seeing*, *loving*, and *enjoying* God, and that *for all eternity*. In this sweet occupation all our desires will be satisfied and our souls for ever ravished with ineffable delight.

First we shall *see* God. No human eye has yet beheld Almighty God, for the weakness of our human nature could not support the splendour and glory of his presence. Hence, as you have read in your sacred history, when God has wished at different times to make his will known to men, he has always concealed from their eyes his Infinite Majesty and Splendour, which only the Saints and Angels in heaven are permitted to behold. Thus, when he spoke to Moses in the desert, it was from the midst of a burning bush (Exod. iii. 2); and when he accepted from King Solomon the magnificent temple, which he had built in his honour, he appeared under the form of a bright cloud which filled the interior of that holy place (3 Kings viii. 10). But it will not be so hereafter, if we have the happiness to be among the number of the saved. Then we shall behold God as he is, and shall for ever feast our eyes on his incomparable

beauty. Hence the Apostle St. Paul says, "We now see through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). And oh, how ravishing will not the sight of him be, who is Beauty and Loveliness itself! For all that we see in this world that can charm the eye or delight the senses, is but a spark or a ray of that Infinite Beauty who has made them what they are, and who must infinitely surpass in loveliness the creatures which he has made. Hence it is that, though the beauties of the creation,—the green fields and verdant woods, the smiling valleys and the lofty mountains, the sparkling ocean and the blue sky spangled with millions of bright stars,—though these and other objects may serve to remind us of the Infinite Beauty of the God who made them, yet they can never give us a just idea of his Loveliness, which as far surpasses what we admire in them, as heaven exceeds earth, and God his creatures. Add to this, that, as all things are in God, whoever beholds God will behold in him whatever is beautiful or lovely in his creatures, particularly the incomparable splendour of the sacred humanity of Jesus, the surpassing loveliness of Mary his B. Mother, and the beauty and glory of the Saints and Heavenly Spirits. And what must not be the splendour and magnificence of the heavenly Jerusalem, that happy city where God will dwell with his chosen ones! The Apostle St. John, who was permitted to behold it in a vision, to give us some idea of it, says, that the city is of pure gold, the gates of pearls, and the walls of precious stones (Apoc. xxi.). But even the inspired words of an evangelist can give us but a faint idea of the glory and beauty of that happy abode.

In the second place, we shall not only *see* Almighty God in heaven, we shall also *love* and *enjoy* him. In other words, we shall both love and possess him, and possessing him, our hearts will be so filled with joy and gladness, that we shall desire nothing more. We shall then have attained the end for which God made us, and in which alone our hearts can find perfect rest. For all the pleasures of the world can never satisfy our hearts or make us truly happy. They please us but for a

moment, and then they leave behind a weariness of soul and a desire of something more ; but when we shall possess Almighty God, every desire will be satisfied. In possessing him we shall possess everything, and in the enjoyment of him our souls will be ravished with every delight and with the purest joys, in comparison with which all the pleasures of this world will appear empty and worthless. Hence the holy Psalmist David cries out : “ Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord ; they shall praise thee for ever and ever. Better is one day in thy courts above thousands. I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners ” (Ps. lxxxiii.). And the Apostle St. Paul, who had been raised up to the third heaven by Almighty God, on witnessing the glory of the Saints, exclaims : “ Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him ” (1 Cor. ii. 9).

Finally, what will complete the happiness of the Blessed is, that all this joy, and rapture, and delight will be theirs *for evermore*. No fear now of losing Almighty God by sin ; no danger of sorrow, or pain, or sickness, coming in to check their happiness, or draw the tear of sorrow from their eyes. For, “ God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away ” (Apoc. xxi. 4).

Oh, my dear children, how little are all the trials, and labours, and sufferings of this short life in comparison with the eternal joys of heaven, which we purchase thereby !

#### TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD.

“ And after six days, Jesus taketh unto him Peter, and James, and John, his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart. And he was transfigured before them. And his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as snow. And behold ! there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking to him.

“ And Peter, answering, said to Jesus, *Lord, it is good for us to be here. If thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.*

"And as he was yet speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them. And lo ! a voice out of the cloud saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him.*

"And the disciples, hearing, fell upon their face, and were very much afraid. And Jesus came, and touched them, and said to them, *Arise and fear not.* And they, lifting up their eyes, saw no one but only Jesus" (Matt xvii.).

#### THE YOUNG NIVARD.

When St. Bernard and his three brothers were about to quit the world in order to serve God in the monastery of Citeaux, they first repaired to the Castle of Fontaines, to bid adieu to their aged father, and implore his blessing. As they came out of the gates of the castle, which is situated on the summit of a hill, they saw their little brother Nivard playing with other children of his age. "Good-bye, Nivard !" said Guy, the eldest of the brothers ; "you will now be your father's heir, and one day master of all you see around. We leave to you all our possessions." "What !" said the child, with a wisdom beyond his years ; "you take heaven for yourselves and leave me earth ! Assuredly this division is not equal, and I shall very soon follow you." And so indeed he did when he grew older, for he also quitted the world, and entering the Abbey of Citeaux, put himself under the direction of his brother Bernard.—*Life of St. Bernard.*

#### ST. TERESA AND HER BROTHER RODERICK.

When St. Teresa was a little girl, not more than seven years old, she used to spend much of her time with her little brother Roderick in reading the lives of the Saints and conversing about holy things. The thought of eternity made a deep impression upon their young hearts, and they were never tired of repeating these words, "For ever, for ever, for ever ! What ! shall the blessed see and enjoy God for ever ?" When they read the history of the monks and hermits, they wished, like them, to abandon all for God, and tried to build themselves little hermitages in their father's garden, but, being only small and weak, they were not able to finish them. It was the history of the martyrs, however, which filled them with the greatest delight. It seemed to them that the martyrs had purchased heaven very cheaply, since by short sufferings they had secured eternal joys. They wished that they could do the same, and one day set out privately from home and left the city, intending to make their way to the country of the Moors, where they hoped to be martyred for the faith. As they went along, praying with great fervour, they were met by one of their uncles, and brought back to their mother, who was in a state of the greatest distress at their unexpected absence. Teresa did not escape without a scolding, for Roderick laid all the blame on his little sister ; but Almighty God was, no doubt, pleased with her innocent fervour. Though

prevented from aspiring to the crown of martyrdom, she continued to devote herself with more zeal than ever to the service of God, animating herself with these words, *Eternity, eternity!* This thought of eternity was like the good seed spoken of in the Gospel, which produced a hundredfold in her future life.—*Life of St. Teresa.*

Let us, my dear children, plant in our hearts the same good seed which made the little Teresa grow into a saint—*Eternity! Eternity!* Whisper to yourselves when you lie on your beds at night, or when you find yourselves tempted to sin, “If I live well, I shall be happy with God for ever. If I live badly, I shall burn for ever with the devils in the flames of hell.”

Q. Shall not the wicked also live for ever?

A. Yes; the wicked also shall live and be punished for ever in the fire of hell.

*The wicked also shall live and be punished for ever in the fire of hell.* Their life also will be eternal, but it will not be *life* so much as a living death. They shall live, it is true, both body and soul, but only that every power of the soul, and every limb, and sense, and member of the body, may be tormented for all eternity in the flames of hell. Hence the Holy Scripture calls the punishment of hell *the second death*; the unbelievers, and murderers, and idolaters, and impure, “shall have their portion,” it says, “in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is *the second death*” (Apoc. xxi. 8).

But what, my dear children, will be the nature of the torments which the damned will endure for all eternity in the prison-house of hell? Our B. Lord has revealed them to us in part, but in part only; for as it “hath not entered into the heart to conceive what things God hath prepared for them that love him,” so neither is it possible for man to understand the greatness of the torments which the Infinite Justice of God has prepared in hell for those who outrage and insult him by grievous sin. We know, however, from the words of our B. Redeemer, that hell is “a place of torments” (Luke xvi. 28), in other words, a place set apart for every kind of suffering; that it is an

"everlasting fire," the abode of the devil and the wicked angels (Matt. xxv. 41); moreover, that it is a dungeon of utter "darkness," "where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. xxv. 30); and, finally, that it is a place of continual suffering, where "the worm dieth not and the fire is not extinguished" (Mark ix. 45). From these terrible words of our B. Lord, we may conclude that in hell both body and soul will be alike tormented; that the body will be cast into a raging fire, kindled by the just anger of God, which will for ever burn without consuming it, and that the soul will become a prey to the most bitter anguish and remorse, and will waste herself for all eternity in unavailing fury and despair. "The wicked shall see and shall be angry," says holy David; "He shall gnash with his teeth and pine away: the desire of the wicked shall perish" (Ps. cxi. 10).

Oh, my dear children, let me ask of you, in the words of Holy Scripture, "Which of you can dwell with devouring fire? Which of you shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" (Isa. xxxiii. 14). And which of you would choose the cruel and ugly devils to be your inseparable companions for eternity? None of you, willingly. Flee, then, from mortal sin as you would from hell itself, for he that commits mortal sin is already a child of hell.

#### DIVES AND LAZARUS.

"There was a certain rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, who lay at his gate, full of sores, desiring to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and no one did give him; moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.

"And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died, and he was buried in hell.

"And lifting up his eyes when he was in torments, he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, *Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.*

"And Abraham said to him, *Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between*

us and you there is fixed a great chaos, so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot, nor from thence come hither.

"And he said, *Then, father, I beseech thee that thou wouldst send him to my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torments.*

"And Abraham said to him, *They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.*

"But he said, *No, father Abraham; but if one went to them from the dead, they would do penance.*

"And he said to him, *If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe if one rise again from the dead*" (Luke xvi.).

#### WHICH THE GREATER FOOL?

Many years ago there was a certain lord who kept a fool in his house, as many great men did in those days for their amusement. Now this lord had given the fool a staff, and charged him to keep it, till he met with one that was a greater fool than himself, bidding him, if he met with such a one, to deliver the staff to him. Not many years after, the lord fell sick, and, indeed, was sick unto death. His fool came to see him, and the sick lord told him that he must shortly leave him. "And where art thou going?" said the fool. "Into another world," said the lord. "And when wilt thou return; in a month?" "No," said the lord. "In a year?" "No." "When, then?" "Never, never!" "And what provision hast thou made," said the fool, "for thy entertainment in the place where thou art going?" "Alas! none at all." "What!" said the fool, "none at all? Here, take my staff. Art thou going to dwell there for ever, and hast made no orders for thy entertainment in a place from which thou wilt never return? Take my staff, for I am not guilty of any such folly as this."—*Catholic Weekly Instructor*.

#### NOBLE ANSWER OF SIR THOMAS MORE.

When Sir Thomas More, the learned and pious chancellor of England, had been condemned to death by King Henry VIII. for refusing to acknowledge the King's supremacy, he was visited before his execution by his wife Louisa, who, with prayers and tears, besought him to yield, assuring him that the King would, in that case, consent to spare his life. "Tell me, Louisa," said the noble confessor of the faith, "how many years could I, who am an old man, expect to live?" "You might live," she answered, "for as many as twenty years." "Oh, foolish woman," replied her husband; "and do you want me for twenty years of this miserable life on earth to forfeit an eternity of happiness, and condemn myself to an eternity of torments?"—*Life of Sir Thomas More*.



## SEVENTEENTH INSTRUCTION.

CHAPTER IV.—*Good Works—Hope—Object and Motives of Hope—Grace—Means of Grace.*

Q. Will Faith alone save us ?

A. No ; Faith alone will not save us without good works : we must also have Hope and Charity.

You have now learnt, my dear children, in the first part of the catechism, the principal articles of your faith, that is to say, the chief things which you must believe in order to be saved. But you remember that, besides *believing* in God, you must also *hope* in him and *love* him. For when I asked you what you must do to save your soul, you answered me, in the words of your catechism, “ I must worship God by faith, hope, and charity, that is, I must *believe* in him, *hope* in him, and *love* him with my whole heart.”

We come now to the second part of the catechism, which teaches you how to *hope* in God, in other words, how to show your confidence and trust in him. This you do principally by praying to him. Later on you will see how you are to *love* him, namely, when we come to speak of the Commandments ; for our love of God is shown by the keeping of his commandments (1 John v. 3). You now see why it is that the chapter of the catechism which explains the Apostles’ Creed, has the word *Faith* as its heading, while that which speaks of Prayer is headed *Hope*, and that which treats of the Commandments is headed *Charity*, or the love of God.

*Faith alone will not save us without good works ; we must also have Hope and Charity.* Hope and Charity are, in fact, the good works which are so necessary for us, comprising, as they do, the exercise of Prayer and the practice of the Commandments. The so-called reformers, headed by Luther, taught that faith, or believing only, is sufficient for salvation—a very easy doctrine, but a very false and pernicious one. For Christ himself says, “ If

thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments" (Matt. xix. 17), and in another place he declares, that at the last day "he will render to every man according to his works" (Matt. xvi. 27). Hence St. James says, that "Faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself" (James ii. 17); and to show us clearly that faith alone is not sufficient to save us, he adds, "Thou believest that there is one God, thou dost well; the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? For even as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead" (James ii. 19, 20, 26).

Notice these last words of St. James, my dear children: "Even as the body," &c. What does the Apostle mean by the body without the spirit? He means a body out of which the soul is gone. Have any of you seen such a body? Yes, if you have seen a dead person; for our soul or spirit goes out of our body when we die. Of what use is our body, then? Can it move, can it speak, can it see? No, you know that it cannot. You know that it is a dull, useless lump of flesh, and that even our dearest friends soon want to get rid of it, and take and bury it in the ground. Even so is faith without good works. Good works are to faith what the soul is to the body. They give it life, and beauty, and value in the sight of God; whereas faith without good works is *dead*, that is to say, vain and utterly worthless before God. It is St. James that tells you so. "Even as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead."

Our B. Lord, in several of his beautiful parables, has explained to us the necessity of labouring by the practice of good works to secure our eternal salvation. Listen, and I will relate to you the parable of the ten talents.

#### PARABLE OF THE TEN TALENTS.

"A man going into a far country, called his servants, and delivered to them his goods. And to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one, to every one according to his proper ability; and immediately he took his journey.

"And he that had received the five talents went his way, and traded with the same, and gained other five. And in like manner, he that had received the two gained other two. But he that had received the one, going his way, digged into the earth, and hid his lord's money.

"But after a long time the lord of those servants came and reckoned with them. And he that had received the five talents, coming, brought other five talents, saying, *Lord, thou didst deliver to me five talents; behold, I have gained other five over and above.* His lord said to him, *Well done, good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy lord.* And he also, that had received the two talents, came and said, *Lord, thou deliveredst two talents to me; behold, I have gained other two.* His lord said to him, *Well done, good and faithful servant: because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

"But he that had received the one talent came and said, *Lord, I know that thou art a hard man; thou reapest where thou hast not sown, and gatherest where thou hast not strewed. And, being afraid, I went and hid thy talent in the earth; behold, here thou hast that which is thine.*

"And his lord, answering, said to him, *Wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sow not, and gather where I have not strewed. Thou oughtest therefore to have committed my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received my own with usury. Take ye away, therefore, the talent, and give it to him that hath ten talents. For to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall abound; but from him that hath not, that also which he seemeth to have shall be taken away. And the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth"* (Matt. xxv).

Q. What is Hope?

A. Hope is a supernatural gift, by which we firmly trust that God will give us eternal life and all the means necessary to obtain it, if we do what he requires of us.

Q. Why must we hope in God?

A. We must hope in God because he is infinitely good, infinitely powerful, and faithful to his promises.

We come now to speak of the Virtue of Hope, which the catechism tells us it is so necessary for us to practise, if we wish to save our souls. What then is Hope? It is that *supernatural gift* of God, which enables us to trust with the firmest confidence *that God will give us eternal life and all the means necessary to obtain it, if on our part we do what he requires of us.* From this you see, first of all, that Hope is a pure gift of

God's Goodness, to which of ourselves we have no right or title. Secondly, it is called a *supernatural* gift; that is, a gift which is not a part of our human nature, like the gifts of sight, speech, free-will, &c., which God bestowed upon us when he gave us a human body and a human soul. On the contrary, it is *far above the power of our nature*, unassisted by a special help from God. Thirdly, the catechism shows you what is the proper *object* of hope, that is, what are the things you may justly hope for, namely, *eternal life and the means necessary to obtain it*. And lastly, it teaches you what is the *motive* of Hope when it says that we must hope in God *because he is infinitely Good, infinitely Powerful, and Faithful to his promises*. These are the reasons on which our Hope is grounded, and which enable us to trust in God with a firm and undoubting confidence.

You will notice also that the catechism says, that we can only hope for God's blessing on the condition *that we do what he requires of us*. What is it that God *does* require of us, and which he makes the condition of granting us those graces which we have reason to hope for? The condition of our obtaining eternal life is that we keep God's commandments, and the condition of our receiving the means necessary to obtain it, is that we seek them of God by Prayer and the Holy Sacraments. These necessary means of salvation are nothing else than the different graces which God gives us to overcome temptation, to subdue our passions, to repent of our sins, to exercise the virtues of humility, patience, &c. These graces we may surely hope for from God's Goodness since they will certainly help us to obtain eternal life. On the other hand, we have no reason to hope for the goods of this world, for power, riches, honours, &c., except as far as God sees them useful or necessary to our souls. Hence our B. Lord, when he was asked by the mother of SS. James and John, to place her sons one on his right hand and the other on his left in the temporal kingdom which she thought he was about to establish, told her that she knew not what she asked in soliciting earthly honours for her children, but that they should have a share in the chalice

of his Passion, which would help them to obtain eternal rewards (Matt. xx. 21, &c.).

It is in Baptism that we first receive the habit of Hope, as we do also the habits of Faith and Charity. It is increased in the soul whenever we exercise it, which we do principally by the practice of Prayer. The remembrance of the Infinite Power, and Goodness and Providence of God, of his Incarnation and Death, and of the loving promises he has made us in the Holy Scripture, will also serve greatly to increase our Hope. "Call upon me," says the Lord, "in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee" (Ps. xlix. 15). "Ask and it shall be given you" (Matt. vii. 7). "No one hath hoped in the Lord and hath been confounded" (Ecclus. ii. 11). No, my dear children, from the beginning of the world it hath never been heard that God hath refused the prayer of the humble suppliant, or hath rejected him who placed his hope and confidence in the Divine Mercy.

In the Old Testament, we have many beautiful examples of the heroic exercise of Hope, such as the histories of Job, of Esther and of Judith, of Daniel in the lions' den, and of the three children in the fiery furnace. The story which I am going to relate to you, will, perhaps, please you more than any other, as it shows how even a boy can become a hero, when his soul is animated with a generous confidence in the Power and Goodness of God.

#### DAVID AND GOLIATH.

The Israelites, being at war with the Philistines, lay encamped in their neighbourhood under the command of Saul, expecting a speedy battle. At that time there was in the camp of the Philistines a certain giant named Goliath, who, coming out daily in front of the tents, openly defied the Jewish warriors to single combat, at the same time uttering the most horrible blasphemies against their God. So great was the fear inspired by the huge size and prodigious strength of Goliath, that no one was found among the Israelites who dared to accept the challenge, though Saul had publicly promised riches and honours, nay, even his daughter in marriage, to whoever succeeded in slaying the blasphemer.

Now it happened that a certain shepherd boy, named David, came to the camp to bring food to his three brethren, who served

in the royal army. Hearing the challenge and blasphemies of Goliath, he was moved with a holy zeal, and blushed with shame that no one could be found brave enough to undertake the combat. Wherefore, knowing that God could avenge himself as well by the hand of a boy as by a strong army, he offered himself to the king as ready to engage the giant. Hereupon Saul girt him with his own sword, and clothed him with his own armour, both which, however, David soon laid aside, finding them too cumbrous, and trusting more to the Divine protection than to the skill of man.

"And" David, says the Sacred Writer, "took his staff, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them into the shepherd's scrip which he had with him, and he took a sling in his hand and went forth against the Philistine. And when the Philistine looked and beheld David he despised him. And he said to David, *Am I a dog that thou comest against me with a staff? Come to me, and I will give thy flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field.* And David said to the Philistine, *Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts. This day, and the Lord will deliver thee into my hand, and I will slay thee, and take away thy head from thee, and I will give the carcasses of the army of the Philistines to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.*

"And he put his hand into his scrip and took a stone, and he struck and slew the Philistine. And as David had no sword in his hand, he ran and stood over the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath, and slew him, and cut off his head. And the Philistines seeing that their champion was dead, fled away" (1 Kings xvii.).

In this history, my dear children, we have a beautiful figure of the Christian youth fighting against and overcoming that terrible Goliath, the devil, by the aid of an humble and generous confidence in the Divine protection. Knowing his own weakness, he relies not on himself, but places, like David, all his trust in God, whom he invokes in all dangers and temptations, saying with David, "I am needy and poor, O God, help me" (Ps. lxix. 6), but adding with St. Paul, "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13).

Q. Can we do any good work of ourselves towards our salvation?

A. No; We can do no good work towards our salvation without the help of God's grace.

Of ourselves we cannot do any good work towards our eternal salvation; it is necessary for this that we should

of his Passion, which would help them to obtain eternal rewards (Matt. xx. 21, &c.).

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be assisted and supported by God himself. It is he that must put the good act in our mind: it is he that must help us to begin it, to continue it, and to complete it. This help which God gives us is called his *grace*, and it is so necessary for us that St. Paul says, that we cannot even say the holy name of Jesus, in such a way as will please God, except by the grace of the Holy Ghost. "No man can say the Lord Jesus, except by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. xii. 3). All that we do without the grace of God is only *human*, because it is the act of mere man, unassisted by God, and, therefore, it can only obtain a human reward, that is, a reward in this world. For example, if you give a penny to a poor man merely because you pity him, without a thought of God, and without God helping you by a special grace to do that good work, it is a mere human act, and the reward will only be a temporal one. But when Almighty God helps you to perform a good act, you see it becomes more than a human act; it is a *Divine* act as well, because God has helped you by his grace to do it. The reward of such an act is eternal; it is laid up for you in heaven, and you will receive the recompense of it on that great day of the General Judgment, when God will render to every man according to his works" (Matt. xvi. 27).

Q. What is grace?

A. Grace is a supernatural gift of God, freely bestowed upon us for our sanctification and salvation.

As God's grace is so necessary for us, it is of great importance that we should understand properly what it is, and how we are to get it. I told you just now that it is the help which God gives us to do good actions. It is called *grace*, because it is a favour to which we have no right or title, the word *grace* being taken from a Latin word meaning "favour." For the same reason, the catechism says that *grace is a gift of God*, which is *freely bestowed upon us*; that is to say, God gives it us of his own free Goodness, and without our being able of ourselves to deserve it. It is called, moreover, a *supernatural* gift, because this special help of God to do good actions is

something which does not belong to our nature, but is far *above* it. Hence also the actions which we do by means of God's grace are called *supernatural* actions, inasmuch as we are not able to perform them by our *natural power* without the Divine assistance.

But for what purpose is it, my dear children, that God gives us this supernatural gift of his grace, which we have so little claim to? The catechism says that it is *for our sanctification and salvation*. Here are two words which sound long and hard; but do not be discouraged, they have a very easy meaning. *For our sanctification* means "to sanctify or make us holy," and *for our salvation* only means "to save us." God gives us his grace, then, to make us good and holy, and thus to save us. Without his grace we can neither be good, nor can we ever enter heaven.

Grace, then, is a gift of God, which is above the power of our human nature, and which God gives us, of his own free Goodness, to make us holy, and so to save us.

But does God give grace to every one, do you think? Yes, most certainly, because he wishes every one to be saved, and he knows that we cannot be saved without it. In his Infinite Goodness, he often gives us graces and helps when we have little reason to expect them; but, generally speaking, he requires that we should make use of the means which he has given us to obtain them. Indeed, if we expected that God would help us to get to heaven without our taking the proper means to obtain his assistance, it would not be any longer the virtue of Hope; it would be the sin of presumption.

Q. How must we obtain God's grace?

A. We must obtain God's grace chiefly by Prayer and the Holy Sacraments.

We come now to the means which God has given us to enable us to get his grace or assistance? They are principally these two, *Prayer and the Holy Sacraments*. The source or fountain of all grace is the Passion of our Lord, and the Precious Blood which he has shed for our salvation. For we cannot, of ourselves, *deserve* any grace.

though we can *obtain* it, with God's help, by taking the means which our B. Saviour has given us. These means are chiefly Prayer and the Holy Sacraments.

You sometimes hear foolish people try to excuse themselves for committing sin by saying that they could not help it. A boy gets in a passion and calls names because another boy hits him. He says, "I could not help getting in a passion and calling names, for I was provoked to it." A little girl sees some nice preserves in the pantry, and takes a bit. She says, "I could not help taking a bit, it looked so nice." A working man curses and swears at every little thing. He says, "I know it is a bad thing to do, but I cannot help it, for I have got a habit of it." My dear children, all these people tell lies—yes, downright lies. They *can* help it, if they like, for the grace of God would make them able to overcome that temptation, that passion, that bad habit, and they can get his grace at any time *by Prayer and the Holy Sacraments*. You see, therefore, that whoever is lost at the last day is lost by the neglect, and whoever is saved, is saved by the good use of Prayer and the Sacraments.

If you wish to see a wonderful example of the power of Divine grace in converting a sinner into a Saint, listen to the account related in Holy Scripture of the

#### CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL.

"And Saul, as yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the High Priest, and asked of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues that if he found any men and women of this way, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

"And as he went on his journey, it came to pass that he drew nigh to Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him. And falling on the ground he heard a voice saying to him, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* Who said, *Who art thou, Lord?* And He, *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the good.* And he, trembling and astonished, said, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* And the Lord said to him, *Arise, and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do.* Now the men who went in company with him stood amazed, hearing indeed a voice but seeing no man.

"And Saul arose from the ground. And when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. But they, leading him by the hands,

brought him to Damascus. And he was there three days without sight, and he did neither eat nor drink.

"Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias. And the Lord said to him in a vision, *Ananias*. And he said, *Behold, I am here, Lord*. And the Lord said to him, *Arise and go into the street that is called Strait, and seek in the house of Judas one named Saul of Tarsus. For behold he prayeth*. But Ananias answered, *Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints in Jerusalem. And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that invoke thy Name*. And the Lord said to him, *Go thy way, for this man is to me a vessel of election, to carry my Name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my Name's sake*.

"And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house, and, laying his hands upon him, he said, *Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost*. And immediately there fell from his eyes, as it were, scales, and he received his sight; and rising up, he was baptized. And when he had taken meat, he was strengthened. And he was with the disciples that were in Damascus for some days. And immediately he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God" (Acts ix.).

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## EIGHTEENTH INSTRUCTION.

*Prayer — Nature of Prayer — Distractions — The Lord's Prayer — Who made it — Its Division into seven parts.*

In our last lesson, my dear children, I showed you the necessity of God's grace to enable us to do good actions and secure our salvation. You also learnt that God has given us two chief means of obtaining his grace, namely, Prayer and the Sacraments. To-day we come to speak of the first of these means, namely, Prayer; for the Sacraments and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which is another great means of grace, will be explained in a later chapter of the catechism. Prayer is spoken of first, because it is suited to all times, to all persons, and to all places; whereas we cannot always be hearing Mass or going to the Sacraments, but only when we have a fitting opportunity. It often happens, however, that, when we are at a distance from a church or have no such oppor-

tunity, we find ourselves in great need of the Divine assistance, — for example, when we are exposed to a violent temptation. What, then, must we do? Our B. Lord has told us. “Ask,” he says, “and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Matt. vii. 7, 8). You see, then, that our Good Lord has provided us with an unfailing resource in all our wants, that is, Prayer; promising, moreover, on his Divine word, that he will always grant us what we ask, provided that we pray with proper dispositions. Let us now do our best to understand all about Prayer, which is so great and so necessary a means of salvation.

Q. What is Prayer?

A. Prayer is the raising up of our minds and hearts to God.

Q. How do we raise up our minds and hearts to God?

A. We raise up our minds and hearts to God, by thinking of God; by adoring, praising, and thanking him; and by begging of him all blessings for our soul and body.

Prayer, my dear children, is the first duty of every Christian. It is a special command of Almighty God; but besides that, it is a great privilege, a high honour, and an immense advantage to us to be allowed to speak so freely to the Divine Majesty. The kings of this earth, as St. Teresa beautifully observes,\* do not allow their subjects to approach to their person, or to make known their petitions to them, except through their nobles and officers of state; but *we* may at all times approach to the King of heaven, adore him, thank him for his goodness, and lay open to him all our wants, both for soul and body. And what is the most consoling is, that he is always glad to receive us, ready to hear us, and willing and able to help us; whereas earthly kings sometimes receive the petitions of their subjects with a very bad grace, and very often refuse them. But, in order that we may be always heard by God when we pray, we must

\* See *Anima Divota*.

pray in a becoming manner and with proper dispositions. For the Apostle St. James says to certain persons who do not pray well, and so do not get what they ask, " You ask and you receive not, because you ask amiss " (James iv. 3). Attend, then, while I explain to you what prayer is, and in what manner you must pray in order to be *heard*, that is, to have your prayers granted by Almighty God.

What, then, is prayer? The catechism says, that it is *the raising of the mind and heart to God*. It is the mind which thinks, it is the heart which hopes and loves. Prayer, therefore, consists in thinking of God, in hoping in him, and loving him. You see, from this that it is not strictly necessary to say any words when we pray. If we only think of God in our minds and love him with our hearts, we make a good prayer, though we do not say a single word.

The catechism goes on to say, that *we raise up our minds and hearts to God by adoring him, by praising and thanking him, and by begging of him all blessings for soul and body*. These are, in fact, so many different ways of showing our love to God and our confidence in his Goodness. Thus, when we adore or worship God, we do so to show that we acknowledge him to be our Lord and maker, and love and reverence him as such. When we praise and thank him, it is to show our love and admiration for his Infinite Perfections and our gratitude for his past Goodness. And when we beg blessings from him for soul and body, it is because we hope and trust in One so Good and so well able to assist us. Thus you see that prayer consists in thinking of God, in hoping in him, and in loving him.

#### ST. IGNATIUS AND THE CARRIER.

It is related in the life of St. Ignatius that, being at one time on a journey with some of his pious companions, they hired a peasant to carry their baggage, for they were travelling on foot. Their carrier proved to be a very ignorant and also a very impatient and passionate man; and, when first the good priests hired him, he was much addicted to cursing and swearing, so that they had frequently occasion to reprove and exhort him. Whenever these holy men arrived at an inn, the first thing they did, after hiring a room for themselves and the carrier, was to retire into a corner to pray. In

the meantime, the carrier generally slept on a bench or sat warming himself by the fire. After some time, however, observing the heavenly countenances of these holy men while thus employed, and beginning to think that it might be because they prayed so devoutly that they were so good to every one and so happy and cheerful in the midst of difficulties and privations, he determined to do as they did, and, kneeling down at a distance from them, remained in that posture till they rose up to pursue their journey. Having continued this practice for some time, the carrier seemed to every one to be changed into another man, for he became sober, civil, patient, and obliging. The good religious with reason attributed this happy change to the help which he must have obtained from God since he applied himself to prayer; but, wishing to satisfy themselves further, they one day asked him what prayers he said. "You know that I cannot read," replied the carrier, "neither have I been taught how to pray; but this is what I say to God when I see you praying: 'Lord, I am a poor ignorant man, and I know not how to serve you; but what these holy men are doing, I at least desire to do.'" The good missionaries were much edified by the reply of the peasant, and returned thanks to God, to whom a hearty, good will is more acceptable than the finest language.—*The Diurnal of the Soul.*

#### THE PIOUS LABOURER.

In the parish of Ars, in the time of its saintly curé or parish priest, John Baptist Vianney, lived a simple peasant, poor in the goods of this world and ignorant of its learning, but rich in piety and virtue. He was particularly remarkable for his ardent devotion to our B. Lord in the most holy Sacrament. Whether going to his work or returning from it, never did that good man pass the church door without entering it to adore his Lord. He would leave his tools, his spade, hoe, and pickaxe at the door, and remain for hours together sitting or kneeling before the tabernacle. The holy curé, who watched him with great delight, could never perceive the slightest movement of the lips. Being surprised at this circumstance, he said to him one day, "My good father, what do you say to our Lord in those long visits you pay him every day?" "I say nothing to him," was the reply; "I look at him and he looks at me."—*Life of the Curé of Ars.*

A beautiful and sublime answer. He said nothing, he opened no book, he could not read, but he had eyes—eyes of the body and eyes of the soul, and he opened them, the eyes of the soul especially, and fixed them on our Lord. "I look at him." He fastened upon him his whole mind, his whole heart, his memory, his understanding, all his senses, all his affections. Then our B. Lord looked at him in return, for there were streams of Divine love and of Divine

Grace flowing from the heart of the master into the heart of the servant. This is the secret of becoming Saints. To be Saints is to form the image of Jesus Christ within us ; and to form his image within us, what must we do ? We must look at him often and look at him long, for the more we look at him the more we shall love him, and the more we love him the more we shall be led to imitate him.\*

Q. Do those pray well who, at their prayers, think neither of God nor of what they say ?

A. No ; those who, at their prayers, think neither of God nor of what they say, do not pray well ; but they offend God, if their distractions are wilful.

Almighty God has promised always to hear our prayers, if they are offered to him with proper dispositions ; but he has not promised to hear our prayers if they are said badly, that is, without the dispositions which he requires. But what are the dispositions which God requires ? The first is spoken of in this question and answer of your catechism. It is *Attention*, which means, that we must think of God when we pray, and attend to what we are saying. For if we are thinking of idle and trifling things at a time when we are speaking to the Almighty in prayer, it is plain that we are treating him with great disrespect ; and such prayers, as your catechism says, instead of pleasing God, are more likely to offend him. These idle thoughts, which the devil puts into our minds in time of prayer, are called *distractions* ; and if they are *wilful*, that is, indulged in of our own accord, they displease God, spoil our prayer, and are a sin, of which we should accuse ourselves in confession. Far worse is it, if we talk or play at our prayers, for this is a still greater act of disrespect to God ; and, besides, it is a sin of scandal, since it is the means of leading others into the same sin as ourselves. What would you think, my dear children, if a person were to ask to be allowed to speak to the Queen, and, when she had kindly consented and he was brought into her presence, were to turn his back upon her, and to begin to

\* Remarks of the Biographer.



laugh and talk to some one else in the room? You would say that such a person would deserve to be driven in disgrace from the Queen's presence, to be severely punished, and never to be allowed to come near her Majesty any more. And yet this is what that child does who laughs and talks with his companion when he is allowed to speak in prayer to the great God of heaven, in comparison with whom any earthly king or queen is as a speck of dust. You see, then, how necessary it is to pray with *attention*, in order to please God and obtain what you ask.

But it sometimes happens, when we kneel down to our prayers, that a great many idle thoughts come to our mind, and, though we try to do our best to put them away and attend to our prayers, still we are not able to do so, and our thoughts continue to wander in spite of all our efforts. Do we commit any sin in that case, and is our prayer spoilt? No, my dear children, for such distractions as these are not wilful, because they are not indulged in on purpose, and hence they do not offend God or spoil our prayer. It is not necessary, therefore, to accuse ourselves in confession of such distractions as these, because they are no sin, but only of those which we have given way to on purpose, or not tried to put away when we noticed them.

But is it sufficient, you will ask, to pray with *attention*, or are there other dispositions necessary in order to be sure of having our prayers granted by God? Yes, there are four other dispositions required, though they are not mentioned in the catechism. I will, however, tell you them in short.

The second disposition necessary to make our prayer pleasing to God is *Humility*. "The prayer of him that humbleth himself," says the wise man, "shall pierce the clouds, and he will not depart till the Most High behold" (Ecclus. xxxv. 21). And again, we read in the Holy Scriptures, "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble" (James iv. 6).

The third disposition is *Confidence* in the Divine Goodness and the Power of God to grant our requests. "All things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you

shall receive ; and they shall come unto you" (Mark xi. 24). These are the words of our Lord himself.

The fourth disposition is *Conformity to God's Will*. We must be resigned to God's Will, if he does not think fit to give us exactly the thing we ask, knowing that if he sees that what we ask will be hurtful to us, he will be sure to give us something which is really for our good. "Which of you," said Jesus to his disciples, "if he ask his father bread, will he give him a stone? or a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or, if he ask an egg, will he reach him a scorpion? If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father, who is in heaven, give the good spirit to them that ask him!" (Luke xi. 11-13).

The fifth and last disposition necessary is *Perseverance*, or "continuing to pray," for sometimes Almighty God does not grant us our requests at once, in order to try our faith, and that we may acquire fresh merit by the love and confidence we show in repeating them. For as a man, says our Lord, who asks his neighbour to lend him a loaf will not always get it the first time he asks, but if he continue asking, will in the end obtain it—nay, his friend will press it on him in order to be rid of him—so our Heavenly Father will grant us what we ask if we persevere in prayer, not to be rid of us, indeed, but to reward our humble confidence and perseverance (Luke xi. 5, &c.).

Listen, my dear children, while I tell you again the conditions which our prayer must have in order to be sure to be heard by God. They are five:—Attention, Humility, Confidence in God's Goodness and Power, Conformity to His will, and Perseverance.

#### ST. BERNARD AND THE COUNTRYMAN.

St. Bernard was one day travelling with a poor, simple countryman, who, noticing that the holy man kept his eyes modestly cast down on the ground during the journey, asked him why he did not look around at the country. The saint answered, that it was to avoid distractions in time of prayer. "Well," said the countryman, "when I pray I pray, and when I walk I look about." "Have you, then, no distractions at your prayers?" said St. Bernard. "None at all," answered the countryman. "I do not believe it," said St. Bernard. "Now, let me make a bargain with you; if you can

succeed in saying an *Our Father* without a distraction, I will give you this mule on which I am riding ; but if you do not succeed, you will come to Clairvaux and become a monk." The agreement was made, and the countryman began to recite the *Our Father*, but, after a few words, he interrupted it and said, "Pray, father, will you give me the saddle and bridle too?" "Yes, I should have given you mule, saddle, and bridle," said St. Bernard ; "but because you have been distracted, you have lost all, and you must come with me to Clairvaux and become a monk."

Q. Which is the best of all prayers ?

A. The best of all prayers is the "*Our Father*," or the Lord's Prayer.

Q. Who made the Lord's Prayer ?

A. Jesus Christ our Lord.

Of all prayers, my dear children, the *Our Father* is the best, both because it was made by Jesus Christ our Lord, and is therefore more pleasing to God than any other form of prayer, and also because it is the most beautiful and complete prayer that we can possibly have, containing, in a very few words, acts of the most perfect virtue and the expression of all our wants. It was given by our Blessed Lord to his disciples, in answer to a question put to him by one of them, who said, "Lord, teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples." And Jesus, answering, said to them, "When you pray, say—

"Our Father, who art in heaven,

"Hallowed be thy name,

"Thy kingdom come,

"Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

"Give us this day our daily bread,

"And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.

"And lead us not into temptation,

"But deliver us from evil.

"Amen" (Luke xi. 1, &c. ; Matt. vi. 9, &c.).

From that day to this, the *Our Father* has been always on the lips of our B. Lord's disciples. The Catholic child is taught to utter it as soon as he can lisp ; young and old, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, all repeat it at their morning and evening prayers ; the priest recites it many times in his daily office, and it forms part of the

Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We must not forget, however, that, in order to say it in a manner that will please God, we must repeat it with the heart and not with the lips only. The catechism, therefore, explains carefully the meaning of it, in order that we may understand what we so often repeat, and that, when we say it, the desires of the heart may go up along with the words of the prayer to the throne of God.

Q. Say the Lord's Prayer.

A. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name ;—Thy kingdom come ;—Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.—Give us this day our daily bread ;—and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us ;—and lead us not into temptation ;—but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Now that you have repeated the Lord's prayer can you tell me into how many parts it is divided? Yes, into seven. And what are they called? They are called *petitions*, because in them we *ask* something of Almighty God. For the word *petition* means an asking or begging for something ; so that if any one, for example, were to write a letter to the Queen to ask some favour from her, we should say that he had sent a petition to her Majesty. But notice, that in the Our Father, before the petitions begin, there is a short address to God, to remind us whom we are going to speak to, and to fill our hearts with confidence in his Fatherly Goodness and Infinite Power. This address is as follows, *Our Father, who art in heaven.*

Then come the petitions. The first three relate to God, and the last four to ourselves and our neighbour. Thus you see, the Our Father is divided into two parts. When we say it together, I say the first three petitions which form the first, and you the last four which make up the second part of the prayer.

#### THE PIOUS SHEPHERD.

A priest was one day travelling among the mountains of Auvergne, when he perceived a boy at a little distance who was feeding his sheep on the hillside. Being struck with his devout and recollected appearance, he turned aside to speak to him. "My child," said he, "you must feel very lonely all day here by yourself." "Oh, no, father," said the boy, "I am not at all lonely, for I have always something to do." "And what do you do?" rejoined the priest.

"I have a beautiful prayer that I say," replied the child. "Is it a very long one," said the priest, "that you are busy all day saying it?" "No, Father," replied the boy, "it is a very short one, and yet I can never get to the end of it." "How is that?" asked the priest;—"but first tell me what is the prayer you say." "It is the *Our Father*," said the shepherd; "but when I say the first words, *Our Father who art in heaven*, I come to a stop and can get no further." "Why so?" asked the priest. "Because I cannot help crying," replied the child, "when I think of those words. Is it possible, I say to myself, that I can have God for my Father—God, who made that beautiful sky, that bright sun, those lofty mountains, and all the universe! And yet I know that it is true, and that he allows me, a poor shepherd boy, to call him by the name of Father, while he, on his part, loves and cherishes me as if I were his only child. Then, when I think of all this, I begin to weep, and cannot get on with my prayer. See, father," continued the boy, pointing with his finger over the valley, "see, *there* is the little village where I live. It is very small, and has only a few poor cottages. My family is the poorest of all, and yet I can call God my Father as truly, and be as much loved by him as if I were the greatest gentleman in the city. I am a child of God just the same as he. This it is which makes me weep, and hinders me from finishing my prayer." "No matter," replied the priest, much moved; "do as you have been doing, and God will love you and bless you." So saying the good father went on his way, praising Almighty God, who has hidden the mysteries of his Goodness from the proud and worldly wise, and has revealed them to his chosen little ones.—*Catholic Anecdotes*.

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## NINETEENTH INSTRUCTION.

*The Lord's Prayer—The Introduction—First, Second, and Third Petitions.*

*Our Father who art in heaven*; these, my dear children, are the first words of that most beautiful prayer, which Jesus Christ our Lord, when upon earth, taught us to say to his heavenly Father, and which is therefore called *the Lord's Prayer*. Those few words come before the seven petitions, and are a kind of introduction to them.

Q. Who is it that in the Lord's Prayer is called "Our Father"?

A. It is God who in the Lord's Prayer is called "Our Father."

Yes, it is Almighty God whom we here call by the loving title of "*Father*." This one word is sufficient to fill our hearts with the tenderest love and the most lively

confidence. For what have we not to hope for when it is our *Father* we address, and that Father is *Almighty God*? We speak, therefore, to a Father who loves us with an infinite love, and is consequently most *willing* to grant our requests, and who, being the great God of Heaven, is *able* to do for us whatever we ask of him. "Our Father, who art in heaven." In these two words are contained every ground for a Christian's hope. For in asking a favour from any one, on what ground is it that we ever hope to obtain it? It is only because the person we ask is good and willing to grant it, and also because he is able to give it us. If either of these two conditions is wanting, if we know that the person is either not able or not willing to give us what we ask, we do not think it of any use asking him. But when we say the Our Father, there is no room for any doubt of this kind. In the word *Father* we see at once the Fatherly Goodness and Mercy of God; and when we add, *who art in heaven*, we are reminded of his Infinite Wisdom and Power.

Q. Why is God called Our Father?

A. God is called "Our Father," because he is the Father of all Christians, whom he has made his children by Holy Baptism.

Q. Is not God also the Father of all mankind?

A. Yes, God is the Father of all mankind, because he made them all, and loves and preserves them all.

From these answers you see, that though all mankind may in a certain sense be called the children of God, inasmuch as they are his creatures and daily experience the effects of his loving Providence, yet that every *Christian* has a special right to this title. The reason is, because *he has made them his children by Holy Baptism*. For it is by Baptism that he has cleansed us from original sin and made us members of that mystical body the Church, of which his Divine Son is the Founder and Head. By this intimate union which we have with Jesus Christ we become his *brethren*; and you will find that our B. Lord, when on earth, was wont to call his disciples by this title. Hence also St. Paul calls Jesus Christ "the first born amongst many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29). Now, if we are the brethren of Jesus, it is quite clear that his Father is

likewise our Father, and that we may address him as such, according to the words of St. Paul, "You have received the spirit of adoption of sons whereby we cry, *Abba, Father*" (Rom. viii. 15). In other words, Almighty God solemnly adopts us in Baptism as his children, and gives us the right to address him by the sweet name of *Father*. Moreover, for the sake of his Beloved Son, he makes us partakers of the eternal inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, which belongs to Jesus Christ as the first born and, in his Divine Nature, as the only-begotten Son of the Father. "If you be sons," says St. Paul, you are "heirs also, heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 17). Oh, my dear children, what gratitude do we not owe to God for so glorious a privilege, for such an inestimable favour. For if it be esteemed a high honour and a great piece of good fortune to be born the son or daughter of an earthly king, how much more happy are we in being adopted by Baptism as children of the King of kings, the Lord of heaven and earth.

We must not, however, forget that, though Christians possess by Baptism a special privilege as the adopted sons of God, all mankind may, in a certain sense, be looked upon as his children, and should be treated by us as such. Hence our B. Lord teaches every one, in praying to God, to address him by the name of Father, "When you pray, say, Our Father," &c. (Luke xi. 2). Now, he would not have bade them call God *Father*, unless they could do it with truth. But in what way, you will ask, can it be said, that God is the Father of every living soul? In many ways. The catechism mentions three when it says, *because he made them all, and loves, and preserves them all*.

In the first place, it was God *who made us all*. He is, therefore, entitled to the name of Father far more than our earthly father, who has only given us birth, whereas it was God who *made us*, who made our bodies out of the dust of the earth and our souls out of nothing to his own image and likeness.

But if it is true that God is our Father because he made us, has he also a Father's love towards us? Most certainly; nay, *he loves us* infinitely more than any

earthly father can possibly love his children. Our earthly father loves us only from the time of our birth, but God loves us from all eternity; "I have loved thee," he says in Holy Scripture, "with an everlasting love" (Jer. xxxi. 3). Besides, the love of God towards us is far more tender than that of any earthly parent. "He that toucheth you," he says again, "toucheth the apple of my eye" (Zach. ii. 8), that is to say, what is nearest and dearest to me. For what is dearer to us than the apple or centre of our eye, on which our sight depends; and what is there that we more readily put up our hand to defend, if we are threatened with a blow? And, in another place, he asks, "Can a mother forget her infant so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee" (Isa. xlix. 15). Hence one of your hymns beautifully says—

"No earthly father loves like Thee,  
No mother half so mild  
Bears and forbears, as Thou hast done,  
With me, Thy sinful child."

Finally, Almighty God shows that he is truly our Father by the continual care which he takes of us, *preserving us* from so many dangers, and providing for all our wants. It is he that gives us the air we breathe, the sun which warms us, the rains which cause the earth to produce its plentiful harvest, the animals which furnish us at the same time with food and clothing. It is he who has given us a fond earthly father and mother to watch over and provide for us in our infancy, kind friends and relations to love and assist us, masters and mistresses to train and instruct us,—in a word, it is he who has given us everything that we need to supply our wants, whether of soul or body. Oh, my dear children, when we think of all that God has done for us, how much reason have we not to cry out, with hearts beating with love and gratitude, "Our Father, who art in heaven!"

#### DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

The celebrated Father Beauregard had been one day preaching on Divine Providence in one of the churches of Paris, when, at



the conclusion of his sermon, he was followed into the vestry by a man, who addressed him as follows :—

"I have been at your sermon, sir, and a very fine one it was ; but I cannot see the force of your arguments. In fact, I do not believe that there is a Providence at all, for I receive none of its cares or benefits !"

"What !" said the preacher ; "are you, then, an infidel ?"

"Ah, father," said the man, "facts are stubborn things. I and my wife and three children work hard, and we have never injured any one ; yet, I am reduced to such distress by the failure of a man who owes me money, that, not able to endure such misery, I have determined to put an end to my life."

"And how on earth," said the priest, "did you come to church, if you entertain such a wicked intention as that ?"

"I happened to pass by while the people were going in," replied the man, "and I followed them."

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Q. Why do we say "Our" Father, and not "My" Father?

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Yes, *we are to pray, not for ourselves only, but for all others.* And why so? Because being all children of God and brethren of Jesus Christ, we ought to love our neighbours as ourselves; and, therefore, when we pray for our own wants, we should pray for theirs also. This charity to our neighbour is, as our B. Lord said that it should be, the mark of a true Christian, for there can be nothing narrow-minded or selfish in a true disciple of Jesus. And, indeed, how can we love God without being anxious to see those whom God so loves, and whom his Divine Son died to save, receive his blessings, graces, and helps, as well as ourselves? It is for this reason that, when we are reciting the litanies, we say, "Lord, have

succeed in saying an *Our Father* without a distraction, I will give you this mule on which I am riding ; but if you do not succeed, you will come to Clairvaux and become a monk." The agreement was made, and the countryman began to recite the *Our Father*, but, after a few words, he interrupted it and said, "Pray, father, will you give me the saddle and bridle too?" "Yes, I should have given you mule, saddle, and bridle," said St. Bernard ; "but because you have been distracted, you have lost all, and you must come with me to Clairvaux and become a monk."

Q. Which is the best of all prayers ?

A. The best of all prayers is the "*Our Father*," or the Lord's Prayer.

Q. Who made the Lord's Prayer ?

A. Jesus Christ our Lord.

Of all prayers, my dear children, the *Our Father* is the best, both because it was made by Jesus Christ our Lord, and is therefore more pleasing to God than any other form of prayer, and also because it is the most beautiful and complete prayer that we can possibly have, containing, in a very few words, acts of the most perfect virtue and the expression of all our wants. It was given by our Blessed Lord to his disciples, in answer to a question put to him by one of them, who said, "Lord, teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples." And Jesus, answering, said to them, "When you pray, say—

"Our Father, who art in heaven,

"Hallowed be thy name,

"Thy kingdom come,

"Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

"Give us this day our daily bread,

"And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.

"And lead us not into temptation,

"But deliver us from evil.

"Amen" (Luke xi. 1, &c. ; Matt. vi. 9, &c.).

From that day to this, the *Our Father* has been always on the lips of our B. Lord's disciples. The Catholic child is taught to utter it as soon as he can lisp ; young and old, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, all repeat it at their morning and evening prayers ; the priest recites it many times in his daily office, and it forms part of the

Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We must not forget, however, that, in order to say it in a manner that will please God, we must repeat it with the heart and not with the lips only. The catechism, therefore, explains carefully the meaning of it, in order that we may understand what we so often repeat, and that, when we say it, the desires of the heart may go up along with the words of the prayer to the throne of God.

Q. Say the Lord's Prayer.

A. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name ;—Thy kingdom come ;—Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.—Give us this day our daily bread ;—and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us ;—and lead us not into temptation ;—but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Now that you have repeated the Lord's prayer can you tell me into how many parts it is divided? Yes, into seven. And what are they called? They are called *petitions*, because in them we *ask* something of Almighty God. For the word *petition* means an asking or begging for something ; so that if any one, for example, were to write a letter to the Queen to ask some favour from her, we should say that he had sent a petition to her Majesty. But notice, that in the Our Father, before the petitions begin, there is a short address to God, to remind us whom we are going to speak to, and to fill our hearts with confidence in his Fatherly Goodness and Infinite Power. This address is as follows, *Our Father, who art in heaven.*

Then come the petitions. The first three relate to God, and the last four to ourselves and our neighbour. Thus you see, the Our Father is divided into two parts. When we say it together, I say the first three petitions which form the first, and you the last four which make up the second part of the prayer.

#### THE PIOUS SHEPHERD.

A priest was one day travelling among the mountains of Auvergne, when he perceived a boy at a little distance who was feeding his sheep on the hillside. Being struck with his devout and recollected appearance, he turned aside to speak to him. "My child," said he, "you must feel very lonely all day here by yourself." "Oh, no, father," said the boy, "I am not at all lonely, for I have always something to do." "And what do you do?" rejoined the priest.

"I have a beautiful prayer that I say," replied the child. "Is it a very long one," said the priest, "that you are busy all day saying it?" "No, Father," replied the boy, "it is a very short one, and yet I can never get to the end of it." "How is that?" asked the priest;—"but first tell me what is the prayer you say." "It is the *Our Father*," said the shepherd; "but when I say the first words, *Our Father who art in heaven*, I come to a stop and can get no further." "Why so?" asked the priest. "Because I cannot help crying," replied the child, "when I think of those words. Is it possible, I say to myself, that I can have God for my Father—God, who made that beautiful sky, that bright sun, those lofty mountains, and all the universe! And yet I know that it is true, and that he allows me, a poor shepherd boy, to call him by the name of Father, while he, on his part, loves and cherishes me as if I were his only child. Then, when I think of all this, I begin to weep, and cannot get on with my prayer. See, father," continued the boy, pointing with his finger over the valley, "see, *there* is the little village where I live. It is very small, and has only a few poor cottages. My family is the poorest of all, and yet I can call God my Father as truly, and be as much loved by him as if I were the greatest gentleman in the city. I am a child of God just the same as he. This it is which makes me weep, and hinders me from finishing my prayer." "No matter," replied the priest, much moved; "do as you have been doing, and God will love you and bless you." So saying the good father went on his way, praising Almighty God, who has hidden the mysteries of his Goodness from the proud and worldly wise, and has revealed them to his chosen little ones.—*Catholic Anecdotes.*

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## NINETEENTH INSTRUCTION.

*The Lord's Prayer—The Introduction—First, Second, and Third Petitions.*

*Our Father who art in heaven*; these, my dear children, are the first words of that most beautiful prayer, which Jesus Christ our Lord, when upon earth, taught us to say to his heavenly Father, and which is therefore called *the Lord's Prayer*. Those few words come before the seven petitions, and are a kind of introduction to them.

Q. Who is it that in the Lord's Prayer is called "Our Father"?

A. It is God who in the Lord's Prayer is called "Our Father."

Yes, it is Almighty God whom we here call by the loving title of "*Father*." This one word is sufficient to fill our hearts with the tenderest love and the most lively

confidence. For what have we not to hope for when it is our *Father* we address, and that Father is *Almighty God*? We speak, therefore, to a Father who loves us with an infinite love, and is consequently most *willing* to grant our requests, and who, being the great God of Heaven, is *able* to do for us whatever we ask of him. "Our Father, who art in heaven." In these two words are contained every ground for a Christian's hope. For in asking a favour from any one, on what ground is it that we ever hope to obtain it? It is only because the person we ask is good and willing to grant it, and also because he is able to give it us. If either of these two conditions is wanting, if we know that the person is either not able or not willing to give us what we ask, we do not think it of any use asking him. But when we say the Our Father, there is no room for any doubt of this kind. In the word *Father* we see at once the Fatherly Goodness and Mercy of God; and when we add, *who art in heaven*, we are reminded of his Infinite Wisdom and Power.

Q. Why is God called Our Father?

A. God is called "Our Father," because he is the Father of all Christians, whom he has made his children by Holy Baptism.

Q. Is not God also the Father of all mankind?

A. Yes, God is the Father of all mankind, because he made them all, and loves and preserves them all.

From these answers you see, that though all mankind may in a certain sense be called the children of God, inasmuch as they are his creatures and daily experience the effects of his loving Providence, yet that every *Christian* has a special right to this title. The reason is, because *he has made them his children by Holy Baptism*. For it is by Baptism that he has cleansed us from original sin and made us members of that mystical body the Church, of which his Divine Son is the Founder and Head. By this intimate union which we have with Jesus Christ we become his *brethren*; and you will find that our B. Lord, when on earth, was wont to call his disciples by this title. Hence also St. Paul calls Jesus Christ "the first born amongst many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29). Now, if we are the brethren of Jesus, it is quite clear that his Father is

likewise our Father, and that we may address him as such, according to the words of St. Paul, "You have received the spirit of adoption of sons whereby we cry, *Abba, Father*" (Rom. viii. 15). In other words, Almighty God solemnly adopts us in Baptism as his children, and gives us the right to address him by the sweet name of *Father*. Moreover, for the sake of his Beloved Son, he makes us partakers of the eternal inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, which belongs to Jesus Christ as the first born and, in his Divine Nature, as the only-begotten Son of the Father. "If you be sons," says St. Paul, you are "heirs also, heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 17). Oh, my dear children, what gratitude do we not owe to God for so glorious a privilege, for such an inestimable favour. For if it be esteemed a high honour and a great piece of good fortune to be born the son or daughter of an earthly king, how much more happy are we in being adopted by Baptism as children of the King of kings, the Lord of heaven and earth.

We must not, however, forget that, though Christians possess by Baptism a special privilege as the adopted sons of God, all mankind may, in a certain sense, be looked upon as his children, and should be treated by us as such. Hence our B. Lord teaches every one, in praying to God, to address him by the name of Father, "When you pray, say, *Our Father*," &c. (Luke xi. 2). Now, he would not have bade them call God *Father*, unless they could do it with truth. But in what way, you will ask, can it be said, that God is the Father of every living soul? In many ways. The catechism mentions three when it says, *because he made them all, and loves, and preserves them all*.

In the first place, it was God *who made us all*. He is, therefore, entitled to the name of Father far more than our earthly father, who has only given us birth, whereas it was God who *made us*, who made our bodies out of the dust of the earth and our souls out of nothing to his own image and likeness.

But if it is true that God is our Father because he made us, has he also a Father's love towards us? Most certainly; nay, *he loves us* infinitely more than any

earthly father can possibly love his children. Our earthly father loves us only from the time of our birth, but God loves us from all eternity; "I have loved thee," he says in Holy Scripture, "with an everlasting love" (Jer. xxxi. 3). Besides, the love of God towards us is far more tender than that of any earthly parent. "He that toucheth you," he says again, "toucheth the apple of my eye" (Zach. ii. 8), that is to say, what is nearest and dearest to me. For what is dearer to us than the apple or centre of our eye, on which our sight depends; and what is there that we more readily put up our hand to defend, if we are threatened with a blow? And, in another place, he asks, "Can a mother forget her infant so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee" (Isa. xlix. 15). Hence one of your hymns beautifully says—

"No earthly father loves like Thee,  
No mother half so mild  
Bears and forbears, as Thou hast done,  
With me, Thy sinful child."

Finally, Almighty God shows that he is truly our Father by the continual care which he takes of us, *preserving us* from so many dangers, and providing for all our wants. It is he that gives us the air we breathe, the sun which warms us, the rains which cause the earth to produce its plentiful harvest, the animals which furnish us at the same time with food and clothing. It is he who has given us a fond earthly father and mother to watch over and provide for us in our infancy, kind friends and relations to love and assist us, masters and mistresses to train and instruct us,—in a word, it is he who has given us everything that we need to supply our wants, whether of soul or body. Oh, my dear children, when we think of all that God has done for us, how much reason have we not to cry out, with hearts beating with love and gratitude, "Our Father, who art in heaven!"

#### DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

The celebrated Father Beauregard had been one day preaching on Divine Providence in one of the churches of Paris, when, at



the conclusion of his sermon, he was followed into the vestry by a man, who addressed him as follows :—

"I have been at your sermon, sir, and a very fine one it was ; but I cannot see the force of your arguments. In fact, I do not believe that there is a Providence at all, for I receive none of its cares or benefits !"

"What !" said the preacher ; "are you, then, an infidel ?"

"Ah, father," said the man, "facts are stubborn things. I and my wife and three children work hard, and we have never injured any one ; yet, I am reduced to such distress by the failure of a man who owes me money, that, not able to endure such misery, I have determined to put an end to my life."

"And how on earth," said the priest, "did you come to church, if you entertain such a wicked intention as that ?"

"I happened to pass by while the people were going in," replied the man, "and I followed them."

"Can you, then, any longer," said the priest, "think that there is no Providence ? What but a special Providence could ordain that, on your way to drown yourself, you should enter a church, and hear a discourse so well suited for you, as to induce you to come to the preacher and tell him your troubles ?"

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mercy on *us*, Holy Mary pray for *us*; and not "Lord have mercy on *me*, Holy Mary pray for *me*." And in the Our Father you will see that all along we pray for our neighbour as well as for ourselves. "Give *us* this day our daily bread." "Deliver *us* from evil," that is, deliver our brethren, relations, friends, and all our fellow-creatures, along with ourselves. Thus, you see, we join charity with our prayer; and that God of love, who cannot but be pleased with our charity, will be far more likely to grant us what we ask than if we prayed for ourselves alone.

Q. What do we pray for, when we say, "Hallowed be Thy name?"

A. When we say, "Hallowed be Thy name," we pray that God may be known, loved, and served by all his creatures.

I have told you, my dear children, that the Our Father contains seven beautiful prayers or petitions, in which we lay before Almighty God all our spiritual and temporal wants. But, if we look at these petitions attentively, you will find a great difference between the three first and the four last. In what way is there a difference? In this, that the three first are all about God, praying for his name to be hallowed, his kingdom to come, and his will to be done; and the four last are all about our own wants; praying for our daily bread, forgiveness for our sins, and deliverance from temptation and every evil. Accordingly, it is in this way that we divide the Our Father. Thus, when I am saying it with you, I say the first part, relating to Almighty God, and you say the second part, which refers to ourselves.

We come now to consider the first petition, which is, *Hallowed be thy name*. What is the meaning of the word *hallowed*? It is an old English word, meaning "sanctified," or "made holy." But how can we make the name of God holy, for it is holy already, most holy and sacred? We cannot, indeed, *make* it holy, but we can help to make known to the world how holy it is by praising, loving, and serving him who bears it. The meaning of this petition, therefore, is, *May God be praised, loved, and served by all his creatures*. In other words, we pray

that glory may be given to God by the praise, love, and service which we desire to be rendered to him both by ourselves and by all mankind. It is for this one object, indeed, that God has made us and sent us into the world ; and he has made our happiness in the next world to depend upon our glorifying him in this. For you remember that when the catechism asks, " Why has God made you ? " the answer is, " To know him, love him, and serve him in this world, and to be happy with him for ever in the next." Now, it is for this to be done, namely, for God to be glorified by our knowing, loving, and serving him, that we pray when we say, " Hallowed be thy name."

But perhaps you do not yet understand how the holy and venerable name of God can be hallowed or glorified by the praise, love, and service of such poor creatures as ourselves. Listen, and I will explain it to you more clearly. Let us suppose that a man has two sons. One of them has a bad, ungrateful heart ; moreover, he is very disobedient and unruly. He sets his father at defiance, speaks to him rudely and disrespectfully, and is noted all over the neighbourhood for cursing, swearing, stealing, and every sort of wickedness. Does *he* give glory to his father ? No ; you say that he is a disgrace to his father, that he dishonours his father's name. But the other son, on the contrary, loves his father tenderly, is docile and obedient to his commands, treats him with the greatest respect, defends his honour whenever it is attacked, and, finally, edifies the whole neighbourhood by his virtue and piety. Does *he* give glory to his father ? Yes, for every one says, " Happy the father who gave birth to such a son ! All honour to that good and excellent parent ! " Now you will understand how the name of our heavenly Father is *hallowed*, or glorified, by the virtues and piety of his good children, and dishonoured, alas ! by the vices and evil conduct of the bad.

The beautiful history of Abraham praying for the city of Sodom, shows us how ready Almighty God is to hear and grant the prayers which his faithful servants offer for their brethren. Listen, and I will relate it to you.

## PRAYER OF ABRAHAM.

After Abraham had entertained the three angels, who had come, on the part of God, to announce to him the birth of his son Isaac, they arose, as the Holy Scripture tells us, and turned their eyes to Sodom, being about to proceed to that wicked city to execute the vengeance of God on its guilty inhabitants.

"And the Lord said, *Can I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is multiplied, and their sin is become exceedingly grievous. I will go down and see whether they have done according to the cry that is come to me. And they turned themselves from thence and went their way to Sodom.*

"But Abraham as yet stood before the Lord. And, drawing nigh, he said, *Wilt thou destroy the just with the wicked? If there be fifty just men in the city, shall they perish withal? Far be it from thee to do this thing.*

"And the Lord said to him, *If I find in Sodom fifty just within the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake.*

"And Abraham answered and said, *Seeing I have once begun, I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am dust and ashes. What if there be five less than fifty just persons? Wilt thou for five and forty destroy the whole city?*

"And he said, *I will not destroy it, if I find five and forty.*

"And again he said to him, *But if forty be found there, what wilt thou do?*

"He said, *I will not destroy it for the sake of forty.*

"Lord, saith he, *be not angry if I speak. What if thirty shall be found there?*

"He answered, *I will not do it if I find thirty there.*

"Seeing, saith he, *I have once begun, I will speak to my Lord. What if twenty be found there?*

"He said, *I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty.*

"I beseech thee, saith he, *be not angry, Lord, if I speak yet once more. What if ten should be found there?*

"And he said, *I will not destroy it for the sake of ten.*

"And the Lord departed after he had left speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place" (Gen. xviii.).

Q. What do we pray for, when we say, "Thy kingdom come?"

A. When we say, "Thy kingdom come," we pray that God may come and reign in the hearts of all by his grace in this world, and bring us all hereafter to his heavenly kingdom.

When our B. Lord was brought before the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, by the Jewish mob, he was accused by their leaders of seeking to make himself king, and to destroy the power of the Roman Emperor, who at that time reigned over the Jews. We read in the Gospel,

that Pilate, wishing to discover whether this charge was true, asked him plainly, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" Our Lord answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now my kingdom is not from hence." Again Pilate put the question to him, "Art thou a king then?" This time Jesus answered, "For this I was born, and for this I came into the world" (John xviii. 33, &c.). From this we see, my dear children, that our Lord came into this world to establish a *kingdom*, not, however, a temporal one, as Pilate feared, but a spiritual one, of which he had no reason to be afraid. Now it is of this kingdom that we speak in this petition of the Our Father, when we say, *Thy kingdom come*. In other words we pray, *that God may come and reign in our hearts by his grace, and bring us all hereafter to his heavenly kingdom*.

You see, therefore, that the word *kingdom*, in this place, means "the spiritual reign of God in our souls," which reign is begun in this life by his grace, and made perfect hereafter in heaven. We pray for its establishment, not only in our own hearts, but in the hearts of all mankind, because by this God will be glorified, and also because we are not to pray for ourselves only, but for all others. The establishment of the kingdom of God means, therefore, the conversion of infidels, heretics and sinners, as also perseverance and the increase of God's grace in the souls of the good.

Tell we now, my dear children, do you think that the kingdom of God is established in your own hearts? Who is the king there, Jesus Christ or the devil? I will tell you how you are to know. Have you any mortal sin in your souls? If so, the devil is king there; for by mortal sin you turn traitors to God, renounce your allegiance, and try to overturn his kingdom. If you have no mortal sin on your souls, our B. Lord is still king of your hearts, though perhaps you are not always as faithful to him in lesser things as you should be. Again, take notice, *he* is the king of a country who is obeyed by every one in the land, both high and low, rich and poor. Now, in your

soul, who is it that your passions, your desires, your senses, your affections obey? Is it God or the devil? For example, when the devil puts it into your mind to steal, and our Lord gives you a good thought to be honest, whom do your hands obey? If you find that they obey the devil, and that you give way to the temptation, it is plain that by this you acknowledge *him* to be your king rather than Jesus Christ. But if, on the contrary, you put away the devil's wicked temptation, and, whispering a little prayer to our Lord, follow the good thought which he puts into your mind, then it is clear that you love Jesus Christ as your king, and obey him as such.

There is one more thing to be said, and it is this. Whoever reigns in your hearts now in this world, will reign over you for ever in the next. If our Blessed Lord is your king now, he will bring you hereafter to share for all eternity the glory and delights of his heavenly kingdom. But if the devil now reigns over you, he will reign over you for all eternity in hell, where he will for ever torture and torment you.

Q. What do we pray for, when we say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven?"

A. When we say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," we pray that God may enable us, by his grace, to do his will in all things, as the blessed do in heaven.

In the two first petitions of the Our Father, we have prayed that God may be glorified, and his kingdom established in the hearts of all mankind. Now, this would certainly be the case if all were ready to conform themselves in everything to his adorable Will. We therefore pray, in this third petition, that God will give us grace to do his Holy Will on earth with the same exactness and the same cheerful readiness with which the blessed angels and saints do it in heaven.

I need not tell you, my dear children, that we are bound by every title to do the Holy and Adorable Will of God whenever we can discover it. He is our Maker and Preserver; all that we have, and our very being, is his gift. He is, therefore, our Sovereign Lord and Master; but he would rather we should try to do his Holy Will

because he is our tender and loving Father. Moreover, we have the happiness of knowing that, when we are doing the Will of God, we are working out our own salvation, for God has made our eternal happiness in the next world to depend upon doing his holy Will in this.

How then, you will ask, are we to know what the Will of God is; for if we can only find that out, the road to heaven is straight before us. Listen and I will tell you.

In the first place, Almighty God has made known his Will to us by his commandments. "I am the Lord thy God," he said to the Jews, "Thou shalt not have strange gods before me. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," &c. Whoever, therefore, breaks any of the Ten Commandments goes against the plain and distinct Will of God.

In the second place, God makes his Will known by his Church. "He that heareth you," says our Lord, "heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me" (Luke x. 16). Whoever, therefore, breaks the commandments of the Church, for example, by eating meat on Friday, missing Sunday's Mass, &c., evidently transgresses the express Will of Almighty God.

Thirdly, God makes his Will known to us by our Superiors, that is, our parents, masters, or those whom he places over us. Our Superiors are to us in the place of Almighty God. If we disobey them, we disobey God; if we murmur against them, we murmur against God himself.

Fourthly, God makes his Will known by all that happens to us, since all that happens in the world happens by God's direct sending, or by his permission. Thus, if sickness comes to us, we know that it is God who has sent it; if we lose some dear friend or relative by death, we know that it is God who has taken him away; and if we are ill treated or badly spoken of, we know that, though this seems to come from our neighbour, still it has happened to us by God's special permission, and that he has certainly some good design in permitting it to befall us. And not only is this the case in great and impor-



tant things, but even in the least events that happen to us, so that we have the opportunity every moment of gaining immense merit by cheerfully and readily submitting to the Will of God in everything that he sends us. For example, we are to go on a pleasant excursion, and a storm comes on and prevents us; we lose a nice prize which we expected to get; we find the weather too cold in winter and too hot in summer. In all these things we should recognise the Will of God, who, with a wonderful providence, rules and directs everything for our good, so that what he sends us is always the best thing that could happen to us. Whoever, therefore, grumbles and murmurs at any thing which befalls him, grumbles and murmurs against the Will of Almighty God, and in reality against his own good. But whoever, on the contrary, seeks in all things to follow and conform himself to the Will of God, is walking in the footsteps of the Saints, on the straight and direct road to eternal life.

Our B. Redeemer, who is the perfect model by which we are to form our lives, teaches us in many places that the life of a Christian upon earth should be employed only in doing the Holy and Adorable Will of God. But what he has taught us by his Divine Words, he teaches us still more powerfully by his own example. Hence he says of himself, "I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the Will of Him that sent me" (John vi. 38). And, again, "My meat is to do the Will of Him that sent me" (John iv. 34).

#### EXAMPLE OF OUR BLESSED LORD.

Follow our B. Lord, my dear children, through every circumstance of his painful life, and you will find him employed only in doing the Will of his Heavenly Father. If he was born in a stable, subjected to every suffering and privation at his very entrance into the world, and exiled into Egypt in his earliest infancy, it was to fulfil the Will of his Father who had so decreed it. If again he remained for thirty years in a poor cottage, working at the laborious trade of a carpenter, and obedient in all things to his own creatures, it was because his Heavenly Father so willed it. And if in the end he was subjected to so many cruel torments in his Passion, and closed his life by an agonizing death upon the cross, it was that he might accomplish in all things the Adorable Will of his Father.

Wherefore, he says by the mouth of his prophet, "In the head of the book it is written of me, that I should do thy will. O my God, I have desired it, and thy law in the midst of my heart" (Ps. xxxix. 8, 9). And St. Paul adds, "He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 8).

But if you wish to see more clearly how powerfully the love of his Father's Will ruled in the heart of our Lord, and how entirely it guided every action of his life, go with him in spirit to the Garden of Olives on the night before his Passion. There all the torments which he was about to suffer came before his mind, one by one, in the most clear and distinct manner, and oppressed his soul with a mortal sadness. "He began," says the evangelist, "to grow sorrowful and to be sad" (Matt. xxvi. 37). Prostrate on the ground he prayed to his Heavenly Father, but he seemed to be rejected by Him, laden as he was with the sins of the whole world, which he had taken it upon himself to atone for. The ingratitude of mankind, which he so clearly foresaw, their many horrible sacrileges, and the loss of innumerable souls in spite of his sufferings, filled up the cup of his bitterness. "And being in agony," says St. Luke, "he prayed the longer, and his sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground" (Luke xxii. 43, 44). And what was his prayer? "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. xxvi. 39).

O beautiful prayer, model of the prayer of every Christian, when in suffering and affliction! Like our B. Redeemer we may pray indeed for our sorrow to be removed, but always let us add, "Yet not my will, but thine be done." "Thy Will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

#### PATIENCE OF DAVID.

The holy king David, when driven from Jerusalem and supplanted on the throne by his undutiful son Absalom, whom he had loved above all his other children, acknowledged at once the hand of God punishing him for his sins, and resigned himself entirely to the accomplishment of the Divine Will. The few followers who remained faithful to him, accompanied him in his flight with tears in their eyes, and uttering loud lamentations. Among them was Sadoc the high priest, who, attended by the Levites, bore with him the Ark of the Lord, that David might be consoled in his affliction by the presence of so sacred an object. But the holy king, deeming himself unworthy of so great a favour, bade him return with it to the city. "Carry back," said he, "the ark into the city. If I shall find grace in the sight of the Lord, he will bring me again, and he will show me it and his tabernacle. But if he shall say, *thou pleasest me not*, I am ready; let him do that which is good before him."

Having crossed the brook of Cedron, he was met by a man named Semei, of the family of Saul, who cursed him as he went along, and loaded him with insults and reproaches. Not content with offering him these outrages, he had the insolence even to throw stones at David and his followers. The latter begged the king to allow them to avenge the insult ; and one of them, Abisai, said, " I will go and cut off his head." But David said, " Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bid him curse David ; and who is he that shall dare say, *Why hath he done so ?*" (2 Kings xv. xvi.)

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## TWENTIETH INSTRUCTION.

*The Lord's Prayer concluded—Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Petitions.*

In the first part of the Our Father, my dear children, our petitions were directed to what immediately regards the glory of Almighty God himself—*hallowed be thy Name, thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done.* In the second half which we now come to, our prayers are for our own wants—we ask for our daily bread, pardon for our sins, help under temptations, and deliverance from every evil. Thus you see that the pure love of God does not exclude a true love for our own souls, and by the zeal which we show for God's glory, we have greater reason to hope for his help in our various necessities.

Q. What do we pray for, when we say, " Give us this day our daily bread " ?

A. When we say, " Give us this day our daily bread," we pray that God may give us daily all that is necessary for our souls and bodies.

In this fourth petition of the Our Father, the catechism tells us that *we pray that God may give us daily all that is necessary for our souls and bodies.* For the word *bread* means, in this place, both the spiritual bread or food of our souls, which is the grace of God and the Holy Communion ; and also, the food, clothing, and other necessities of life which we require for the support of our bodies. But notice, that we do not ask for anything more than God sees to be *necessary* or good for us ; wherefore our B. Lord makes use of the word *bread*, bread being of all things the most necessary for our existence. And notice,

too, that he bids us ask only what we require for the present day, "Give us *this day* our daily bread," to show our daily dependence on his Divine Goodness, and teach us to avoid too great care and anxiety. For, as he tells us himself, in one of his beautiful instructions, we have a Heavenly Father ever watching over us, who knows well the wants of his children, and is always ready to provide for those wants, if we daily have recourse to him by fervent prayers. Thus, you remember, when God fed the Jews with manna in the desert, he bade them collect only as much each morning as would be sufficient for the want of the day; and if any of them tried to hoard up a quantity to keep himself and family during the week, and save himself the trouble of going every day to collect it, he was surprised to find that he had lost his labour, for what he had gathered was all corrupted and spoilt by the following morning.

Do not however imagine that because God is good, and willing to supply your wants, you are excused, after you have prayed, from making any further effort on your own part, and that you are to sit down in idleness, expecting everything from his Bounty. No; this would be presumption, and not a well-founded hope in the Divine Goodness. *God*, as they say, *helps those who help themselves*, that is, by their own efforts. It is necessary therefore, that while we ask of God to give us grace, we should make use also of the means which he has given us to obtain it, for example, by hearing Mass devoutly, and going to the Sacraments. In the same way, while we beg relief in our corporal wants, we must do our best by our own honest industry and labour to provide for them. At the same time, in making these efforts we must never forget that all depends on the blessing of God, which we therefore ask continually in this petition, *Give us this day our daily bread*.

#### OUR HEAVENLY FATHER.

"Be not solicitous," says our Lord, "for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat and the body more than the raiment?"

"Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns, and your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they?"

"And which of you, by taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit?"

"And for raiment, why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they labour not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these.

"And if the grass of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe, how much more you, O ye of little faith?"

"Be not solicitous therefore, saying, *What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed?* For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things.

"Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. vi.).

#### POWER OF PRAYER.

Many years ago, in times of persecution, a Catholic Bishop, while travelling in the Highlands of Scotland, for the purpose of visiting the scattered members of his flock, was benighted one dark and stormy night in the midst of a lonely and desolate tract of country. After wandering about for some time in the greatest uncertainty, he was guided 'at length by the glimmering of a light to a lonely cabin, at the door of which he knocked, and begged for a night's lodging. The woman of the house received him with frank hospitality, bade him welcome to the warm fireside, and apologised for not being able to offer him a bed. "The only one that we have," said she, "is now occupied by my husband, who is lying at the point of death." "I am truly sorry to hear of your affliction," said the Bishop, "but I trust he is well prepared for so great a change." "Alas," said the woman, wiping her eyes, "he will not be persuaded that his end is so near. Though he is above eighty, and though the doctor says that his hours are numbered, yet he persists in saying that his time is not yet come." "Will you allow me to speak to him?" said the Bishop; "perhaps the opinion of a stranger may have greater weight, and he may be persuaded to prepare for his approaching departure." "Willingly," said the woman; and with that she led the way into the inner room.

Having approached the bedside, the Bishop saw that there was little time to be lost; everything betokened the near approach of death. This he did not conceal from the old man, and he exhorted him to make good use of the few hours which remained to him upon earth; but his words seemed to produce but little impression. "Sir," said the old man, "I know that my age is great. I know that my strength is almost gone. I even grant that if I saw another

in the state in which I am, I would say he was at the point of death ; but, for all that, I know that my time is not yet come."

"My dear friend," said the Bishop, "do not deceive yourself. Why should not death come to you as well as to the rest of men? What can have put so strange a delusion into your head?"

"I will tell you then, sir," said the old man, raising himself up in bed. "Why should I fear now what man can do to me? I am a Catholic. I have remained faithful to my God, in spite of every danger and every difficulty, though in this wild place I have not seen a priest but twice in thirty years. But every day during these thirty years have I prayed to God, that I might not die without the consolations of religion. He will not refuse this prayer—I know he will not ; and, when I have a Catholic priest at my bedside to give me the last Sacraments, then I shall believe I am going to die, but not till then."

"My son," said the Bishop, "prepare yourself for death ; I am a Catholic priest."

The holy rites were administered ; the faithful soul slept in peace, and the good Bishop went on his way rejoicing, and praising God for his wonderful works towards the children of men.—*The Little Flower Garden.*

#### THE THUNDERING LEGION.

Marcus Aurelius, the Roman emperor, was engaged in a disastrous war with the Quadi, a warlike people living on the north of the Danube. His army had been hemmed in by the enemy within a narrow defile, and was, moreover, on the point of perishing for the want of water. Among his troops, however, were a large number of Christian soldiers, who, seeing the danger which threatened them, had recourse for help to the God of heaven. Kneeling on the ground, they poured out earnest entreaties to God to rescue the army and their emperor from destruction, by sending them a supply of water and enabling them to escape from their dangerous position. The enemy, and even their fellow-soldiers, stood amazed at this unexpected sight, but they were far more astonished at the speedy answer which God gave to their prayers. They had not been long on their knees, when suddenly the sky became dark, the wind howled through the forests, vivid flashes of lightning shot across the heavens and torrents of rain began to descend. The Roman soldiers first received the refreshing drops in their mouths, being ready to die with thirst ; they then caught them in their helmets ; but while they were so engaged, the enemy, wishing to overpower them in the storm, began the attack. The violence of the tempest was now turned upon the forces of the enemy. Blinded with wind and rain, they were unable to follow up the attack, and soon fled in disorder. The Romans, refreshed and strengthened, pursued them with great vigour, and gained a complete and decisive victory.

The pagan emperor justly attributed this victory to the prayers

of his Christian soldiers, and they were from that time known by the name of the *Thundering Legion*. In the city of Rome there may still be seen a column or pillar on which is carved a representation of this victory. The Romans are represented as fighting bravely with the enemy, and in the midst of the battle refreshing themselves with draughts of the falling rain. The enemy, on the contrary, are flying from the field of battle, where many lie stretched on the ground from the violence of the storm.—*Butler's Saints' Lives*.

Q. What do we pray for when we say, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us?"

A. When we say, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us," we pray that God may forgive us our sins as we forgive others the injuries they do to us.

In this fifth petition of the Our Father, we pray that God will *forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us*. But what is the meaning of the word *trespass*, my dear children? It is an old English word, meaning a "sin" or "offence." At present, with the change of language which is always going on, the meaning of the word is a little different. For now we only use the word *trespass* in speaking of one who goes on other people's land without leave. We say of such a one that he is trespassing, or committing a trespass; and I have no doubt you have often seen, at the entrance of a field, a board with the words, written in large letters, "Trespassers will be prosecuted." It is not in this meaning, however, but in the old or general meaning of "sin" or "offence," that the word is used in the Our Father, so that we here pray *that God may forgive us our sins, as we forgive others the injuries they do us*.

Whenever, therefore, we say this petition, we beg of God to pardon us our sins, and hence we should try to say it with great humility, acknowledging ourselves to be sinners, and with great sorrow, since God only forgives our sins when we truly repent of them. Our B. Lord has indeed given us the Sacrament of Penance or Confession, as the great and principal means by which we may obtain pardon for our sins; but as there are many sins which we daily commit, and all of which we cannot perhaps remember when we go to confession, and as, moreover, we cannot get to confession except at certain

times, our Lord has mercifully provided us with other means of obtaining his pardon for lesser offences, as, for example, by this petition of the Our Father which we recite so often.

But notice that our B. Lord has taught us to pray for pardon for our sins only according as we forgive others, or, as this petition says, *as we forgive them that trespass against us*. For there is nothing so hateful to God as malice, ill-will, and the spirit of revenge, and those who entertain these feelings against their neighbour have no reason to expect any mercy or pardon from their Heavenly Father. Therefore, our Lord, to remind us of the duty of mutual forgiveness, has put this condition to our prayer; and, in explaining this petition to his disciples, he expressly says, "If you will forgive men their offences, your Heavenly Father will forgive you your offences. But if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offences" (Matt. vi. 14, 15). And in another place he says, "If you offer your gift before the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee; leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming, thou shalt offer thy gift" (Matt. v. 23, 24).

See, then, my dear children, how necessary it is for us, if we hope for pardon from God, to pardon others also from our hearts when they injure us, and to do our best to be reconciled and to make friends with them. And how, indeed, can we possibly continue to bear malice against them, when we remember the immense debt which we ourselves owe to God? If they have offended us, how much more have not we outraged and offended God? Besides, those that *do* injure us, though they sin by so doing, are but instruments in God's hand—instruments which he makes use of to punish us, and to give us an opportunity of meriting a greater reward. Put away, then, from your hearts any rancour or ill-will, when you go to pray. Never lie down on your bed out of friends with any one, lest you should die out of friends with God. Imitate our Divine Lord who, on the cross, prayed for even those who persecuted and crucified him.



We read in the Holy Gospel, that one day when our B. Saviour was instructing his disciples, St. Peter came to him, and put the following question: "*Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?*" Jesus saith to him, *I say not to thee till seven times, but till seventy times seven times.*" Our Lord then went on to explain the duty of mutual forgiveness by the following beautiful parable.

#### PARABLE OF THE TWO SERVANTS.

"The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who would take an account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents. And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. But that servant falling down, besought him, saying, *Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.* And the lord of that servant, being moved with pity, let him go and forgave him the debt.

"But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him a hundred pence; and laying hold of him he throttled him, saying, *Pay what thou owest.* And his fellow-servant falling down, besought him, saying, *Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.* And he would not, but went and cast him into prison, till he paid the debt.

"Now his fellow-servants, seeing what was done, were very much grieved, and they came and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him, and said to him, *Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me. Shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee?* And his lord, being angry, delivered him to the torturers, until he paid all the debt.

"So, also, shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts" (Matt. xviii.).

#### THE TWO SEBASTIANS.

The Blessed Sebastian Valfré, when a boy at school, was distinguished for his amiable manners and sweet and gentle disposition. One day a quarrel arose between two of his companions, and one of them, who was likewise called Sebastian, being very angry, openly declared that he would have his revenge for the injury he had received. The young Valfré, hearing of this, went to the angry boy, and thus accosted him: "Did you say the Our Father this morning, my dear Sebastian?" "I did," replied the other. "But did you say it attentively?" continued Valfré, in a sweet and persuasive tone. "Most certainly," said the other, who did not see

the drift of the question. "Then," continued Valfré, "since you said it with attention, you must have observed these words, *forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us*. Ah, my dear friend, let us not shut ourselves out from the hope of the Divine Mercy by refusing to pardon those who give us offence." The angry boy was so touched by these simple words of the pious youth, that he laid aside all thoughts of revenge, and forgave his school-fellow on the spot.—*Life of B. Sebastian Valfré.*

## ST. JOHN THE ALMONER.

We read in the life of St. John, Patriarch of Alexandria, sur-named the Almoner on account of his extraordinary almsdeeds, that he had on several occasions tried in vain to reconcile to each other two noblemen who had quarrelled, and lived in a state of mortal enmity. At length, despairing of moving them by his words and entreaties, he sent for the one, who showed the greatest degree of obstinacy, inviting him to come to his house, and assist at the Mass which he was about to celebrate in his private oratory. The nobleman accepted the invitation, and on his arrival the Saint began the Mass, and proceeded as far as the Pater Noster, or Our Father, which it was the custom at that time for those who assisted at the Mass, to recite along with the priest. St. John accordingly began it, and the nobleman said it with him ; but as soon as he reached the fifth petition, the Saint came to a full stop, and left the nobleman to finish it alone. Then, turning to him, he exhorted him earnestly to weigh the meaning of the words he had pronounced ; that there, in the very presence of Jesus Christ, he had implored God to pardon him or not, according as he forgave or refused to forgive his enemy. The nobleman was so struck with this reflection, that he fell at the Saint's feet, promising to dismiss all thoughts of revenge, and to go at once and ask his enemy's forgiveness. No sooner was the Mass over than he put his design into execution, and from that moment became a sincere friend to his former adversary.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

Q. What do we pray for, when we say, "Lead us not into temptation" ?

A. When we say, "Lead us not into temptation," we pray that God may give us grace not to yield to temptation.

*Lead us not into temptation.* This is the sixth petition of the Our Father. In the last petition we begged of God to forgive us our *sins*, and in this we ask him to preserve us from *temptation*. For temptation, as you all know, is the mother of sin ; and though God might pardon our past sins, yet we should fall into fresh ones, if he did not help us to overcome temptation.

But who is it, my dear children, who *tempts* us, that is, who tries to get us to commit sin? It is not Almighty God, because God is Holy and Good, and hates sin, and "God tempteth no man" (James i. 13), as St. James says. Who then? It is the devil, who is the bitter enemy of God and man, and tries to get man to commit sin, that God may be dishonoured, and man may be ruined and destroyed. But could not God, you will say, prevent the devil from tempting us? Most certainly he could; but for his own wise ends he does not prevent him. He allows him to go on tempting us, as he formerly let him tempt Adam and Eve in the Garden of Paradise. And he permits it for the selfsame reason for which he allowed our first parents to be tempted, namely, that we may show our obedience and love to him, and merit his heavenly rewards by resisting temptation. For he does not allow us to be tempted above our strength, that is, above the strength of his grace, which he will always give us if we ask him, and which alone will enable us to overcome temptation. Wherefore St. Paul says, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. x. 13).

But if it is the devil and not Almighty God who tempts us to sin, what is it that we mean by asking God in this petition not to *lead us into temptation*? We mean two things:—First, to beg of God to restrain the power of the devil, and not to allow him to tempt us too violently; and, secondly, to ask him to give us in all our temptations the necessary grace to overcome them. We do not, therefore, pray so much to be freed from temptation, since temptation is necessary for us to merit heaven, as to be delivered by the increase of God's grace from the danger of falling under it. In other words, we pray, as the catechism says, *that God may give us grace not to yield, or give way, to temptation*. This grace our Good God will always give us if we ask it, provided that we, on our part, do not expose ourselves willingly to danger, for example, by reading bad books or going into wicked com-

pany, for then we could not expect God to preserve us. God has promised to help us to overcome temptation, if we do our best to avoid it; but he has likewise warned us, that "he who loves the danger shall perish in it" (Ecclus. iii. 27).

Our B. Redeemer, who has given us in his own person a perfect model, by which to form our conduct in all the events of life, allowed himself to be tempted in the desert by the evil spirit, that he might show us how to overcome the attacks of the devil. Listen and I will tell you the history of our Lord's temptations as they are related by St. Matthew.

#### JESUS TEMPTED BY THE DEVIL.

"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry.

"And the tempter, coming, said to him, *If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.*

"Who answered and said, *Not on bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.*

"Then the devil took him up into the holy City, and set him upon the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, *If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written, 'that he hath given his Angels charge over thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest perhaps thou dash thy foot against a stone.'*

"Jesus saith to him, *It is written again, 'thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'*

"Again the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and said to him, *All these will I give thee, if, falling down, thou wilt adore me.'*

"Then Jesus saith to him, *Begone, Satan, for it is written, 'The Lord thy God thou shalt adore, and him only thou shalt serve.'*

"Then the devil left him, and behold Angels came and ministered to him" (Matt. iv).

#### TEMPTATIONS OF ST. PAUL.

St. Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, who suffered so much for his Divine Master, and received in reward such an abundance of heavenly favours, was afflicted at one time with grievous temptations, which he calls a sting of the flesh, meaning, probably, violent temptations of impurity. These were permitted by God, to preserve him in a spirit of humility, for he himself says, "Lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me." The holy Apostle, detesting from his heart the wicked suggestions of the tempter,

earnestly and repeatedly begged our B. Lord to deliver him from this severe trial ; but the only answer he received from God was this, " My grace is sufficient for thee, for power is made perfect in infirmity " (2 Cor. xii.).

For this example we see, that though God is always ready to give us grace sufficient to preserve us from sin, he sometimes permits the temptation to continue for his own wise ends, namely, that the power of his grace may become more perfectly established in our hearts by our correspondence with it, and that he may be more glorified by the victories which we gain over the efforts of the tempter.

#### TEMPTATIONS OF ST. ANTHONY.

The great St. Anthony, who retired into the desert to avoid the dangers and seductions of the world, and to give himself up to prayer and works of penance, was even there pursued by the violent attacks of the devil, and subjected to the most grievous temptations. At one time his body was cruelly beaten by Satan, and remained for a long time on the ground apparently lifeless ; at another, the wicked spirits assumed all kinds of hideous shapes, in order to terrify him and distract him in his prayer. But what was the most dangerous and afflicting to his pure soul, were the wicked thoughts and filthy imaginations which never ceased to assail him. On one occasion, when he had for a long time bravely withstood the attacks of the devil, and was still grievously tempted, suddenly a ray of heavenly light burst in upon him, scattered his enemies, and filled him with joy and consolation. St. Anthony, feeling that our B. Lord was near him, cried out, with that humble confidence which true love alone can give, " Where wast thou, my Lord and my Master ? Why wast thou not here from the beginning of my conflict to assuage my pains ? " A voice answered him, " Anthony, I was here the whole time. I stood by thee, and beheld thy combat, and because thou hast manfully withstood thy enemies, I will always protect thee, and will render thy name famous throughout the earth." At these words St. Anthony knelt and returned thanks to that good Lord who, when he knew it not, stood by to defend and assist him in his combat.—*Butler's Saints' Lives*.

#### THE PRESUMPTUOUS HERMIT.

We read in the lives of SS. Palemon and Pachomius that, while living together in solitude in the deserts of Thebais, they were one day visited by another hermit, who begged admittance into their cell. On entering he perceived a fire, and, being puffed up with pride and presumption, said, " You see that fire ; well, if you have faith, and slowly repeat the Lord's Prayer, you may place yourself in the flames without danger." St. Palemon charitably reproved him for his criminal presumption, telling him, that to act thus would

be to tempt God, and that whoever did so would have no reason to hope for the Divine protection. The new-comer, however, rejecting the advice of the holy man, threw himself upon the burning coals, and, as Almighty God permitted in punishment of his pride, actually received no hurt; whereupon, the unhappy man, more blinded than ever, reproached the two Saints for their want of faith.

The next day he took his departure and returned to his cell, where he quickly met with the punishment of his vain-glory and presumption; for as soon as he was alone the devil began to tempt him with impure imaginations, and he, who had so prided himself on his firmness and courageous faith, yielded shamefully to the wicked temptation. No sooner had he done so than he gave way to despair, and, rushing from his cell, cast himself into a blazing furnace, where he perished miserably.—*Lives of the Fathers of the Desert.*

Q. What do we pray for, when we say, "Deliver us from evil"?

A. When we say, "Deliver us from evil," we pray that God may free us from all evil, both of soul and body.

This is the last of the seven petitions of the Our Father, and in it we pray to God to *free us from all evil*, that is, from anything that can injure us, either in *soul or body*, in time or eternity. Now, of all evils, my dear children, the greatest is sin, which is, indeed, the cause of every other evil; and the next greatest to sin is eternal damnation, which is the just punishment of the worst kind of sin, viz., mortal sin. Those other things which we commonly look upon as evils, such as sickness, poverty, and various kinds of afflictions, are, in reality, not evils in themselves, since they are intended by God to be the source of good to us, by exercising our virtue, and giving us the means of making satisfaction for our sins, and acquiring a crown of glory in heaven. However, as, owing to our own imperfection, we often make a bad use of these things, we ask of God that, as far as he sees it good for us, he will be pleased to deliver us from these evils also. You see, therefore, how our Lord compassionates our weakness, and how he has provided a remedy for all our wants and necessities in the seven petitions of this beautiful prayer.

#### THE PRIEST AND THE BEGGAR.

We read in the works of Thaulerus that there was a certain learned Divine, who had made it his continual prayer to God for

eight years, that he would direct him to some man who would show him the true way in which to walk. At length on one occasion, when praying with extraordinary fervour, he heard a voice from heaven, which said to him, "Go to the church porch, and there thou shalt meet with a man who will show thee the way of truth." On going thither he found a poor beggar, whose feet were covered with sores and dirt, while all the clothes on his back were not worth three farthings. The priest, saluting him courteously, wished him a good morning. "Father," replied the beggar, "I never remember to have had a bad morning." "God prosper you," said the priest. "What say you?" replied the beggar, "I never was otherwise than prosperous." "I wish you all happiness," said the priest. "Why," said the poor man, "I never was unhappy." "God bless you," said the priest, "explain yourself, for I do not understand your meaning."

"I will do so willingly," answered the poor man. "You wished me a good morning, and I answered that I never had a bad morning; for if I am hungry, I praise God; if I suffer cold, I praise God; if it hail, snow, or rain, be the weather fair or foul, I give praise to God; if I am miserable and despised by the world, I still give praise to God; and, therefore, I never meet with a bad morning. You also prayed that God might prosper me, to which I answered, that I was never otherwise than prosperous; for I know for certain that all God does must needs be for the best, and, therefore, whatever happens to me by his will or permission, whether pleasant or disagreeable, sweet or bitter, I receive it with joy as coming from his merciful hand for the best—so that I was never otherwise than prosperous. You wished me also all happiness, and I in like manner replied that I had never been unhappy; for I have given up my own will to God so entirely, as only to will what he wills, and, therefore, I never was unhappy, having no desire to have any will except his."—*Old Edition of Philothea.*

From this example we see, that no temporal affliction can disturb a heart entirely united to God, and conformed to his Holy and Adorable Will.

Listen, now, while I repeat to you, in short, what I have taught you about the Lord's Prayer.

The words *Our Father, who art in heaven*, are a short introduction to excite our confidence, by reminding us of the Goodness and Power of God.

The first three petitions relate principally to God. We pray for

His Name to be glorified,  
His Kingdom to be spread, and  
His Will to be accomplished.

The last four petitions relate to ourselves. We pray,

first, for the daily support of our souls and bodies, and then to be freed

From our past sins,

From the danger of future ones, and

From all evil.

We conclude with the word *Amen*, which means, "May it be so," as much as to say, "This is our prayer, O good God! wilt thou be pleased to hear and to grant it."

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## TWENTY-FIRST INSTRUCTION.

*The Hail Mary—On Praying to the Saints and Angels—First and Second Parts of the Hail Mary—On Devotion to the Blessed Virgin.*

Q. Should we ask the Angels and Saints to pray for us?

A. Yes; we should ask the Angels and Saints to pray for us.

Q. Why should we ask the Angels and Saints to pray for us?

A. We should ask the Angels and Saints to pray for us, because they are our friends and brethren, and because their prayers have great power with God.

Having now explained the Lord's Prayer, we come to speak of the Hail Mary, which is the next best prayer that we can say. But first of all, the catechism teaches us that it is a good and holy practice to ask the prayers of the Saints and Angels; and this for two reasons,—first, *because they are our friends and brethren*; and, secondly, *because their prayers have great power with God*. In other words, they are both *willing* and *able* to help us; willing, because they are our brethren, and able, because they are the friends and favourites of God, and their prayers have, therefore, great power with his Divine Majesty.

In the first place, the Angels and Saints *are our friends and brethren*. For are not those truly our brethren who are children of the same Heavenly Father; who acknowledge the same Head, Jesus Christ; and who are united with us by the strongest bonds of fraternal charity? Now, all this is true of the Saints and Angels in heaven. God is our common Father, because he made us all, Angels as well as Saints and sinful men, and also because



he continually watches over and preserves us. He has, moreover, given his Divine Son to be our common Head. For the Angels, though, as they had never sinned, they stood not in need of the grace of the Redemption, nevertheless love our B. Lord as their Head, and acknowledge and obey him as such. Hence, St. Paul says, he "is the Head of all principality and power" (Col. ii. 10); that is, of the choirs of heavenly spirits. Finally, it is for the same eternal glory that God has created us. The Saints and Angels are already in secure possession of that eternal kingdom; but we also hope one day to enter into their happy company (Heb. xii. 22). Meanwhile they regard us with a brother's love, watching over us with the tenderest care, assisting us in our combats, and pleading for us continually at the throne of God.

But the Saints and Angels are not only *willing* to help us, they are also *able*, for *their prayers have great power with God*. Who can doubt it, my dear children, since they are the friends of God, and ever stand in his Divine presence? If earthly monarchs do not fail to grant many favours to their subjects at the prayer of those who stand about their thrones, and whom they honour with their friendship, especially if they have laboured and suffered in their service, is it possible that the Great King of Heaven will refuse to those blessed spirits, who have been faithful to him from their first creation; to that glorious band of martyrs who have suffered cruel torments, and death itself, in his service; to those holy confessors, who have abandoned everything that the world holds dear for his love; is it possible, I ask, that he will refuse to these good and faithful servants, these dear children, whatever they ask, especially when they plead for those who are his children too, and whom his Divine Son died to save? And most of all, what will he refuse to that B. Mother, who bore him in her womb, nursed him in her arms, fed him with her own milk, and during three and thirty years performed all the offices of the tenderest of mothers in his regard, until she received his last expiring sigh upon the cross? You see, then, how clearly it stands to reason that the prayers of the

Saints, and especially of Mary, the Queen of Saints, have great, very great power with Almighty God.

When you grow older, you will sometimes hear Protestants say that Catholics dishonour our Lord by asking the prayers of the Saints, and that there is only one Mediator, Jesus Christ, between God and man, that is to say, only one who can plead for us at the throne of God. Now, those who say this forget that the Catholic Church teaches that the Passion and Death of our Lord are the source of all merit, and that whatever grace God gives, whether to man, or Saint, or Angel, he grants only for the sake of his Divine Son. How, then, can it dishonour Jesus Christ, if we ask others to offer for us, to God, the merits of our B. Lord, as well as offer them ourselves, especially when those whom we ask are God's special friends? And this is simply what we do when we ask the Saints and Angels to pray for us, since we know that they are only heard because their prayers are offered up in union with and through the merits of Jesus Christ. And again, if it is no dishonour to our Lord to ask the prayers of our brethren upon earth, who are sinners like ourselves, a thing which Protestants themselves do not scruple to do, how can it dishonour him to ask the prayers of those pure Spirits and Blessed Saints who have in them no spot or stain of sin, and are always pleasing in his sight?

Q. How can you show that the Angels and Saints know what passes on earth?

A. We can show that the Angels and Saints know what passes upon earth from the words of Christ: "There shall be joy before the Angels of God upon one sinner doing penance."

These words of our Lord prove clearly that the Angels in heaven not only know, but take the liveliest interest in what passes upon earth. *There shall be joy before the Angels of God*, he says, *upon one sinner doing penance* (Luke xv. 10). It is plain that they must know of the sinner's repentance, to be able to rejoice at it. Hence, also, in many parts of Scripture we find the Angels mentioned as pleading before the throne of God for the wants of man, which shows that they both know our wants and are anxious to relieve them.

When Moses died, the Archangel, St. Michael, says St. Jude, "disputing with the devil, contended about his body" (Jude i. 9). St. Michael, to whom the care of the Jews seems to have been particularly entrusted by God, knowing of the death of Moses, feared, no doubt, lest the Jews, so prone to idolatry, might be tempted, after the manner of the surrounding nations, to render Divine worship to the body of one whom they had seen perform so many miracles. Again, the prophet Zachary says, that the Angel, who appeared to him, pleaded at the throne of God for mercy on the Jews, reminding the Lord that he had now been angry with them for seventy years (Zach. i. 12). And St. John says, in the book of his Revelations, that he saw the Angels offering up the prayers of the faithful servants of God upon the golden altar (Apoc. viii. 3, 4). From these and other passages of Scripture it is clearly seen, that the Angels know our wants, offer up our prayers, and themselves plead for us before God. And if the Angels know what passes on earth and interest themselves so lovingly in our behalf, why not the Saints too, those Spirits of the just made perfect, who, like the Angels, ever enjoy the sight of God, and are his special friends and favourites? If God could not hide, as he says, from that just man Abraham the vengeance which he was about to execute on the guilty city of Sodom (Gen. xviii. 17), is it likely that he will hide from his beloved Saints in heaven the wants of their parents, relations, and friends, whom they have left behind them upon earth, or of those who honour them devoutly and recommend themselves to their intercession? No, my dear children, in beholding the clear vision of God, the Saints in him likewise behold his creatures. The knowledge which they had on earth of the wants of their fellow-men, and their tender charity and compassion for those wants, only become more perfect when they are removed from earth to heaven. There they no longer see, as before, "in part and in a dark manner," as the Apostle says, but "face to face;" for "when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Cor. xiii. 10-12); and there the flames of charity with which they were consumed on

earth shall burn more brightly, being lit up in the presence of God at the very furnace of love, for *God is Charity* (1 John iv. 16).

Q. What is the chief prayer to the Blessed Virgin which the Church uses?

A. The Hail Mary.

If the Our Father is the best of all prayers, the second best is certainly the *Hail Mary*. For the Hail Mary is not a common prayer made by man, but a Divine prayer inspired by God himself, and uttered first by the lips of Angels and of Saints. Accordingly, there is no prayer, after the Our Father, which has at all times been more in use in the Catholic Church than the Hail Mary. The Church herself frequently repeats it in the sacred office recited by her clergy at the different hours of the day, and recommends it continually to her children, to be used by them in their daily morning and evening prayers, and also in the Rosary, Angelus, and other devotions. Since, therefore, we repeat the Hail Mary so often, we ought to understand it well, in order that we may say it with proper dispositions. But before I begin to explain it to you, repeat it for me slowly and devoutly.

Q. Say the Hail Mary.

A. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

You see here, my dear children, that the Hail Mary is divided into two distinct parts, the first of which begins with the words "Hail Mary," and the second with the words "Holy Mary." The catechism now goes on to explain the first part.

Q. Who made the first part of the Hail Mary?

A. The angel Gabriel and St. Elizabeth, inspired by the Holy Ghost, made the first part of the Hail Mary.

Yes, the first part was composed by the angel Gabriel and St. Elizabeth, the cousin of the Blessed Virgin, inspired by the Holy Ghost. You know already the history of these Divine words, for I have before told you

how our B. Lady, when praying in her little cottage at Nazareth for the redemption of man, was visited by the great Archangel, St. Gabriel, who came to her on the part of God to announce to her that she was chosen among all women to be the Mother of his Son made man. "Hail Mary," he said to her, "full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women." He then went on to announce that the Son of God should be born of her, by the power of the Holy Ghost, without prejudice to her virginity. And Mary having given her consent to the accomplishment of the mystery in those humble words, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word," at the same moment the Redeemer of the world took flesh within her womb.

The other words of the first part of the Hail Mary were first spoken by St. Elizabeth, the mother of St. John the Baptist and the cousin of the Blessed Virgin. It was on the occasion of the visit which Mary paid to St. Elizabeth soon after she had received the message of the Angel. No sooner did St. Elizabeth behold her and hear her voice, than the infant in her womb leaped for joy, and St. Elizabeth, being "filled," as the Evangelist says, "with the Holy Ghost," exclaimed, as if taking up the very words of the Archangel, *Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb* (Luke i. 40, &c.). To these words the Church has added the Holy Name of Jesus, which the Angel on different occasions taught to Mary and to Joseph.

I have now related to you the *history* of the first part of the Hail Mary. Attend while I explain, in short, the *meaning* of the words it is composed of.

The word *Hail* is a form of greeting in use in the East, and means "I salute" or "I greet thee."

*Mary* is the name of the Blessed Mother of God, a name full of mysteries and dear to the hearts of her children. It means, in the Hebrew language, "Lady," and is also interpreted "Star of the Sea," as St. Bernard explains to us.

*Full of grace*, for Mary was always full of Divine Grace, even before she conceived in her womb the very

Fountain and Author of Grace, our Blessed Lord. In her very conception, indeed, God had not only preserved her from sin, but had enriched her with every grace that could fit her for the most high dignity of Mother of God, and these graces she so well corresponded with, that she became, as the Church calls her in the Litany, a spiritual vessel, full of every virtue and excellence.

*The Lord is with thee.* For even before he took flesh in her womb, he dwelt by grace spiritually in her heart.

*Blessed art thou amongst women.* Blessed, indeed, and happy above all other women in being chosen to be the Mother of her God.

*And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.* Yes, the fruit of her womb is no other than the ever Blessed Jesus, who is "worthy to be praised and glorified and exalted for ever" (Dan. iii. 52). Thus, in the Hail Mary, we glorify the Son along with the Mother in the spirit of the Church of God, which, after the example of St. Elizabeth herself, never separates the Mother of the Redeemer from him whom she brought into the world.

The catechism now goes on to speak of the second or last part of the Hail Mary, which begins with these words, "Holy Mary, Mother of God."

Q. Who made the second part of the Hail Mary?

A. The Church of God, guided by the Holy Ghost, made the second part of the Hail Mary.

*The Church of God*, my dear children, *guided by the same Holy Spirit* who had inspired the Angel Gabriel and St. Elizabeth, made the second part of the Hail Mary. Listen and I will tell you how it was that it came to be composed and to be used by the faithful throughout the Church.

During the time of the Apostles and their immediate disciples, when the memory of Mary's holiness and greatness was fresh among mankind, no one ever thought of calling in question her high dignity and power with God. But about four hundred years afterwards there arose an impious man, named Nestorius, who dared to blame the Church for the honour paid to the B. Virgin, and to assert.

blasphemously that she was not the Mother of *God* but only of *man*, as if the human nature, which God the Son took of Mary, were a person of itself, separate and distinct from God the Son, who took it. Thus, you see, he made Jesus Christ *as man*, a different person from Jesus Christ *as God*, whereas you know that it was One only Person, the Son of God, who, being God from all eternity, took a human body of the B. Virgin, and was made man to redeem us. The Catholic Church teaches, therefore, that Mary, being the Mother of this Person, the Son of God made man, is justly called the "Mother of God," and honoured as such.

To confound the false teaching of Nestorius and prevent him from misleading the minds of the faithful, a great council of Bishops, headed by the legates or representatives of the Pope, met in the year 431 at Ephesus, a city of Asia Minor. It was in this city, as we learn from early tradition, that Mary had spent the last years of her life in company with the beloved disciple to whose care our B. Lord had entrusted her, and the memory of her holy life and sublime virtues was still cherished fondly in the hearts of the Ephesians. After hearing all that Nestorius had to plead in defence of his false doctrine, and all that St. Cyril of Alexandria, who accused him before the Council, had to say in defence of Catholic truth, the Council unanimously declared that it had always been taught and believed in the Church that there was but one Person in Jesus Christ, the Person of God the Son; and that Mary, being the Mother of Jesus Christ, was, therefore, the Mother of God. The whole city of Ephesus, transported with joy at the decision of the Council, took up the cry with one voice, "Mary is the Mother of God!" and the people, forming themselves into procession, paraded the streets in the midst of general illuminations and rejoicings, singing everywhere canticles and hymns in honour of the ever Blessed Virgin.

The words of the second part of the Hail Mary are so simple and easy, and come so home to the heart of every child of Mary, that they scarcely, I think, require any explanation. *Holy Mary, Mother of God.* In these

words we express our firm faith in the doctrine of the Catholic Church that she is truly the Mother of God, and we arouse our confidence by reminding her of that title, on which our hopes are so firmly grounded ; for what can the Son of God refuse to his own Mother? *Pray for us sinners now.* These words contain a beautiful and humble prayer for her continual assistance in all our present wants. We acknowledge, indeed, that we are sinners, but that is only another motive to excite her compassion, for is she not the Refuge of sinners, and the Mother of him who died to atone for our sins? *And at the hour of death.* Yes, in that hour of our last struggle, when all shall have abandoned us, and when we most need her powerful help. May she be near us then to soothe and support us, to drive away the evil spirits, to receive our last sigh, and welcome us into the kingdom of her Divine Son. Oh, my dear children, how much courage will not the remembrance of so many Hail Marys that we have said during life give us at that last moment, if we have only said them with fervour and devotion ; for each of them is a prayer for a happy death, and for Mary's special help in the hour of our greatest need ! Try, then, always, in reciting the Hail Mary, to say it not with your lips only, but with your heart, desiring to unite yourself, in saying the first part, with the Angel Gabriel and St. Elizabeth, and to repeat the second with the same fervour with which it was first proclaimed in the churches of Ephesus.

We conclude, as in the Our Father, with the word *Amen*, by which we mean, " This is truly our prayer, O Blessed Mother ; be thou pleased to receive and to grant it ! "

Q. Why should you frequently say the Hail Mary ?

A. We should frequently say the Hail Mary to put us in mind of the Incarnation of the Son of God ; and to honour our Blessed Lady, the Mother of God.

Q. Have you any other reason for often saying the Hail Mary ?

A. Yes ; another reason for often saying the Hail Mary is to ask our Blessed Lady to pray for us sinners, at all times, but especially at the hour of our death.

Q. Why does the Catholic Church show great devotion to the Blessed Virgin ?

A. The Catholic Church shows great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, because she is the Immaculate Mother of God.



These are questions, my dear children, which are often put to Catholics by those who differ from them in religion, and which every Catholic, therefore, should be well able to answer. The catechism teaches you how to do so; and, indeed, you will always find that the words of the catechism contain the best and most exact answers that can be given to the objections urged against the doctrines of the Church by those who do not belong to her. Hence, a Catholic child, who knows and *understands* his catechism well, is a match for the most learned divine who rejects the teaching of the Church.

Why is it, then, that we say the Hail Mary so frequently? The catechism says that it is for three reasons:

1. To put us in mind of the Incarnation of the Son of God.
2. To honour his Blessed Lady, the Mother of God.
3. To ask the powerful help of her prayers.

In the first place, it is *to put us in mind of the Incarnation of the Son of God*, that is to say, to remind us continually how God the Son took a human body and soul, and became man to redeem us. Indeed, the Hail Mary is, as it were, a short history of our Lord's Incarnation. You have there the message of the Angel announcing the sublime mystery, the testimony of St. Elizabeth to the fact of its accomplishment, and the solemn declaration of the Church, that Jesus Christ is truly God made man, and that Mary is his Mother. What can be more fitting for us than continually to excite our love and gratitude to our B. Lord for becoming man, by repeating the history of this great event in words, not written merely by the pen of man, but spoken by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth!

The second reason why we so often repeat the Hail Mary, is *to honour the Mother of God*. For, as I told you before, we cannot separate in our thoughts and affections the Son from the Mother. When we think of that loving Saviour who became man to redeem us, we naturally think of her who brought him into the world, nursed and tended him in his infancy, was inseparably united with him in his youth and manhood, and stood by

him in all his cruel sufferings, even to his last expiring sigh upon the cross. And when we think of her, we *love* her, we love her for her love and tender care of him, and for that tender love of us which made her sacrifice for our salvation that Divine Son, who was the only joy of her life, nay, far more to her than life itself. But we do more than love her. We *reverence and honour* her for her high dignity and near relation to him who is worthy of all honour and adoration. We cannot forget that God himself has honoured her by choosing her as his Mother, by preserving her immaculate or unstained by sin, by endowing her with every grace, and showing her in everything a filial reverence and ready obedience during the thirty years he lived with her on earth. Oh! my dear children, how can we go wrong in imitating our Lord himself in the love and reverence which he showed to his Blessed Mother? How beautifully do the words of your hymn answer every objection that can be brought against the devotion which is shown by every true Catholic to the Immaculate Mother of God?

“But scornful men have coldly said  
Thy love was leading me from God,  
And yet in this I did but tread  
The very path my Saviour trod.

“They know but little of thy worth  
Who speak these heartless words to me;  
For what did Jesus love on earth  
One-half so tenderly as thee?

“Jesus, when his three hours were done,  
Bequeathed thee from the cross to me;  
How can I rightly love thy Son,  
Sweet Mother, if I love not thee?”

Finally, we say the Hail Mary so frequently, in order to obtain the powerful help of our B. Lady's prayers both during the whole course of our lives, and especially at the great and awful moment of our death when we shall stand most in need of her assistance and intercession. For if it be true, as we have already seen, that the Angels and Saints, inasmuch as they are our brethren and the friends of God, are both willing and able to help us, and

that therefore it is a good and holy thing to call upon them in our necessities and invoke their intercession with God, how much more reason have we not to ask with confidence the help and protection of her who is the *Queen of Angels and Saints*, nay more, who is the very *Mother of God*, given by him to be the Refuge of Sinners and the Mother of all his disciples !

**Q.** How is the Blessed Virgin Mother of God ?

**A.** The Blessed Virgin is Mother of God, because Jesus Christ her Son, who was born of her as man, is not only man, but is also truly God.

**Q.** Is the Blessed Virgin also our Mother ?

**A.** Yes ; the Blessed Virgin is also our Mother, because, as we are the brethren of Jesus, we are the children of Mary.

These answers, my dear children, you will easily understand, as I have already explained them in speaking of the doctrine of our B. Lord's Incarnation. The B. Virgin Mary is *Mother of God*, because Jesus Christ, her Son, is God as well as Man ; and she is *our mother*, because Jesus Christ by becoming man has made us his brethren, and, therefore, the adopted children of his own Immaculate Mother. This favour he confirmed to us with his dying lips, when upon the cross he commended us all to her in the person of St. John, and bade us all henceforth look upon her and treat her as a mother ; " Woman, behold thy son ; son, behold thy mother " (John xix. 26, 27).

Cherish, therefore, ever in your hearts a tender devotion to the Immaculate Mother of God. Remember always that she is your own loving and affectionate mother, and love and honour her as such. Place an unbounded confidence in her intercession, for what can our B. Lord refuse to her whom he himself so loves and honours ? If the mother of an earthly king can hardly meet with a refusal when she asks a favour from her royal son, how much less the Mother of the King of Heaven, especially as what she asks, being for the salvation of man, is always in accordance with the wishes of his Sacred Heart ? In all your wants and necessities, therefore, recommend yourself to Mary, and especially ask her help in time of temptation

by some little prayer, such as that which comes upon the miraculous medal : " O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee ! " Do not fail to recite the Angelus morning, noon, and night, in honour of Jesus and his B. Mother, and very often, the Rosary, that beautiful devotion, so dear to the faithful children of Mary. The remembrance of the devotion you have shown to Mary during life will be your sweetest consolation and support at the hour of death.

#### ST. MARY OF EGYPT.

St. Mary of Egypt, that great model of penitence, led in her youth an abandoned life in the city of Alexandria, in Egypt. Walking one day on the sea-shore she perceived a vessel on the point of setting out to the Holy Land with a number of pilgrims who were going to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Mary embarked along with them, not for purposes of devotion, but to obtain a better opportunity of following her wicked life among so vast a concourse of pilgrims. Having arrived at Jerusalem, she repaired to the church along with the rest of the faithful who were eager to venerate the remains of the Sacred Cross ; but on attempting to enter, she was held back by a mysterious and invisible power. This was repeated each time that she renewed the attempt. While others entered with ease, an irresistible force drove her back to the church porch. Filled with terror and amazement at this extraordinary occurrence, she began to consider within herself whether it might not be a just punishment for her wicked life, which rendered her unworthy to approach within sight of the sacred relics. Then, bathed in tears, she beat her breast and bewailed her wretched condition, until at length, perceiving above her head the image of our B. Lady, she threw herself on the ground, and earnestly besought the Mother of God, the Refuge of Sinners, to intercede with her Divine Son that she might be permitted to venerate, with the rest of the faithful, the sacred wood on which he died for the sins of men. At the same time, she promised that if this favour were granted her, she would forthwith abandon her wicked life, and do penance, to the best of her power, for her past sins.

Having finished her prayer, she again attempted to enter, and this time she experienced no hindrance. When she had performed her devotions, she returned to the image of Mary to thank her for her powerful protection and beg her direction for her future life. That same night, warned by a mysterious voice, she set out on foot to the river Jordan, and having received the Sacraments in a little church upon its banks, crossed the river and entered the savage deserts beyond it. For seven and forty years she continued here in practice of the most severe penance, living on the roots of the earth,

and suffering the greatest extremities of cold and heat. A year before her death she was discovered in this solitude by the holy priest Zosimus, a monk in a neighbouring monastery, whom God sent to administer to her the Holy Sacraments before her death, and to whom she related her wonderful and edifying history.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

#### ST. TERESA'S DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

The holy virgin St. Teresa was blessed with a good and virtuous mother, who taught her early to love the B. Virgin and practise little devotions in her honour. She was not quite twelve years old when her mother died, and, as Teresa had loved her tenderly, she was almost inconsolable at her loss. In the midst of her affliction, she threw herself before an image of our B. Lady, and begged her, with many tears, now that her earthly mother was taken from her, to be a mother to her in her stead. This act, performed in all the fervour and simplicity of childhood, drew upon the young Teresa the special love and protection of Mary; and the Saint assures us that she never recommended herself to her Heavenly Mother without experiencing her help.—*Life of St. Teresa.*

Let us imitate this holy virgin, and, having chosen Mary for our mother, let us pray to her with a lively confidence, love her with filial tenderness, and honour her by good and innocent lives.

#### ST. STANISLAUS KOSTKA.

St. Stanislaus Kostka, who died at the early age of eighteen, was distinguished among his many virtues for his tender and childlike devotion to the B. Virgin. He was never so happy as when he was speaking of her, reciting her rosary, praying before her image, or depriving himself of some little indulgence in her honour.

Our B. Lady, on her part, rewarded his filial devotion with many special favours. On one occasion when he lay dangerously ill, she appeared to him carrying in her arms the Infant Jesus, and, placing the Divine Child on the bed beside him, permitted Stanislaus to admire, adore, and caress him. The heart of Stanislaus overflowed with a holy joy, and, like St. Peter on mount Thabor, he wished always to enjoy the same happiness; but Mary, with a look of love, said to him, "Your time is not yet come, my child. You must first merit the possession of Jesus by an entire obedience to his will."

The holy youth was not long separated from the object of his desire. While performing the exercises of the novitiate of the Society of Jesus at Rome, he was seized with his last illness, which he himself had foretold a few days previously. The Feast of the Assumption of our Lady was drawing near, and he had earnestly prayed that he might be permitted to celebrate that great festival in heaven. On the eve of the Feast, a slight illness from which he was suffering became at once so alarming, that it was thought

advisable to administer to him the last Sacraments. He received them with extraordinary fervour, and remained afterwards conversing interiorly with his Saviour. From time to time he pressed to his lips an image of Our Lady, which he held in his hand, or cast his eye upon his rosary beads, which he had entwined about his arm. "Stanislaus," said one of the fathers, "what are you doing with your beads, now that you are no longer able to say them?" "It is true, I cannot say them," said the sick youth, smiling, "but still it is a consolation to look at them, for they remind me of my good Mother."

Shortly before his death, our B. Lady came to receive his soul, attended by a company of holy virgins, as Stanislaus himself related to the bystanders. A heavenly joy lit up the countenance of the dying youth, and a few moments after he breathed out his pure soul in the arms of his heavenly Mother, on the very morning of the Feast of her Assumption.—*Life of St. Stanislaus Kostka.*

May you, my dear children, imitate this holy youth in his innocence, his purity, and his tender devotion to Mary, and may your last end be like to his!

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## TWENTY-SECOND INSTRUCTION.

### CHAPTER V.—*Charity—The Ten Commandments— Their Promulgation on Mount Sinai.*

We come now, my dear children, to a most important part of the catechism, namely, that which treats of the commandments of God and his Church. It is most necessary that we should be well instructed on this point, since it is by the commandments that God teaches us what his Holy Will is, and it is only by doing his Will that we can hope to be saved. Hence our B. Saviour himself says, "Not every one that saith to me, *Lord, Lord*, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the Will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. vii. 21). Attend, therefore, carefully to this and the following chapter, which contain a full explanation of the commandments. First of all, the catechism speaks of those commandments which God himself has given to man, and which he has appointed the Church to teach and explain to us. Then, in the next chapter, it goes on to speak of the Commandments or Precepts of the Church, that is to say, of those

rules which the Church, guided by the Holy Ghost, has laid down to enable us better to fulfil the commandments of God, and thus work out our salvation.

You will remember to have noticed at the top of the second chapter of the catechism, in which the Apostles' Creed is explained, the word *Faith* printed in large letters, while the next chapter, which is about Prayer, was headed with the word *Hope*. I told you that the reason was, that the Apostles' Creed teaches us what we are to *believe*, and that Prayer is the expression of our *hope* or trust in God. The chapter that we have now come to is headed with the word *Charity*, which means, as you know, the love of God. Can you tell me why the word *Charity* is put at the head of the chapter which treats of God's commandments? It is because the keeping of his commandments is the way in which we show our Charity or love towards him; just as we show our Faith, by believing what he teaches, and our Hope by praying to him. Hence our Lord says, "He that hath my commandments and doeth them, he it is that loveth me" (John xiv. 21).

You see now, my dear children, that Faith, Hope, and Charity are like three sisters sent by God to conduct us to heaven. Faith lights us on our way, showing us the road by which we are to journey; Hope strengthens and nourishes us with Divine Grace, which we obtain by the devout use of Prayer and the Sacraments; while Charity takes us by the hand and leads us to God. For Charity conducts us by the sure road of the Divine commandments to the kingdom of heaven, where she finally unites us with God in a loving and eternal embrace.

Before going on to explain the commandments, the catechism first speaks of the virtue of *Charity* on which the keeping of the commandments depends. Tell me, then,

**Q. What is Charity?**

**A. Charity is a supernatural gift of God by which we love God above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves for God's sake.**

**Q. Why must we love God?**

**A. We must love God because he is infinitely good in himself, and infinitely good to us.**

Yes, my dear children, by Charity we mean that *supernatural gift*, or habit of the soul, which enables us to *love God above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves for God's sake*. The *object* of Charity, therefore, is God himself either as considered in himself, or seen in his creatures. We love *God*, because he is in himself so infinitely Holy, Wise, Amiable, Beautiful, &c., and also because he is so Merciful and Good to us; and we love our *neighbour*, because he is the work of God's Hands, and because God himself loves him and has commanded the same to us. It is in this double love that Charity consists, and without it all our knowledge and good works, all our sufferings, nay, even the sacrifice of life itself will be of no avail. "If I should speak," says St. Paul, "with the tongues of Angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass and as a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burnt, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor. xiii. 1-3). Since, then, Charity is so necessary a virtue that without it all things else are of no avail, it is of the utmost consequence that we should continually practise it, and show forth by our daily lives that we really possess it. That we may fall into no mistake on this point, the catechism gives us in the next question a safe and easy rule.

Q. How do we show that we love God?

A. We show that we love God by keeping his commandments: "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John xiv. 15).

You see, therefore, my dear children; that the keeping of God's commandments is the *test* of Charity. He that loves God faithfully, keeps his commandments; he that does not love him, despises and neglects them. Hence, if you wish to find out whether you love God or not (and you know that without loving him you cannot be saved), you have only to examine yourselves to see whether you keep his commandments. If you keep them well, you



love God much ; if you keep them badly, you do not love him at all, and if you are trying to keep them better than you have hitherto done, then you are beginning to learn to love God.

We now go on to speak of the commandments of God, which are ten in number. Hence they are sometimes called the *Decalogue*, which means the ten words of God to man.

Q. How many Commandments are there ?

A. There are Ten Commandments.

Q. Say the ten Commandments ?

A. I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage.

1. Thou shalt not have strange gods before me. Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in Heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them.

2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

3. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

4. Honour thy father and thy mother.

5. Thou shalt not kill.

6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

7. Thou shalt not steal.

8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.

10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods.

Yes, my dear children, these are the Ten Commandments, by which Almighty God makes known to us his Divine Will, and instructs us in the duty which we owe to him, to our neighbour, and to ourselves. They contain in themselves a short summary of all our obligations, and are the rule by which we should form our lives and direct all our actions. They are just, they are holy, they are true, they are unchangeable ; for they are the commands of God, who is Justice, Holiness, and Truth itself, and in whom, as the Apostle says, " there is no change or shadow of alteration " (James i. 17). They are the light of our pilgrimage here below, they are the path to eternal life, they are the source of all happiness here and hereafter. Hence the Psalmist beautifully cries out—

" Oh, how I have loved thy law, O Lord !

It is my meditation all the day.

Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths (Ps. cxviii. 97, 105).

The law of the Lord is unspotted, converting souls ;

The testimony of the Lord is faithful, giving wisdom to little ones.

The justices of the Lord are right, rejoicing hearts ;

The commandment of the Lord is lightsome, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is holy, enduring for ever and ever ;

The judgments of the Lord are true, justified in themselves.

More to be desired than gold and many precious stones, and sweeter than honey and the honeycomb ;

For thy servant keepeth them, and in keeping them there is a great reward" (Ps. xvii. 8-12).

Let us, my dear children, imitate the pious David in his love for the Divine commandments. Let us try to understand them well and keep them faithfully, and we shall find, by our own experience, the truth of what David says, that they fill the heart with a sweet consolation, which all the false joys and pleasures of the world can never bestow, and that they draw down upon those, who faithfully observe them, the most abundant blessings from God, both here and hereafter.

I told you just now that it is by keeping the commandments of God that we show our love to him. But whoever loves God truly, loves his neighbour likewise for the sake of God ; for no one can love the Creator without loving the creature, the work of his hands ; nor can any one love our B. Redeemer without loving his fellow-man, whom our dear Lord died to save. Now, it is the ten commandments which teach us how to practise this double love, the love of God and of our neighbour. The first three commandments show us how to love God, and the last seven how to love our neighbour. Hence it is that they were written by God on *two* tables of stone—the one containing the first three commandments which treat of our duty to God, and the other the remaining seven, which instruct us in our duty to our neighbour. Hence, also, our Lord declares that the whole of the commandments may be reduced to these two, the love of God and our neighbour ; for, being asked by the Pharisees, which was " the great commandment of the law," he made them this beautiful answer, "*Thou shalt love the*

*Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind.* This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets" (Matt. xxii. 35-40).

You have said the ten commandments for me as they come in the catechism, I will now teach you them in verse. Perhaps you will remember them better in this way, and when you grow up will be able to teach them to others. For, notice, my dear children, that it is a great charity to teach the commandments to those who do not know them; it is like pointing out to them the road which leads to heaven. Listen now, and I will tell you the verses. Each of the commandments is contained in two short lines—

1. I am the Lord, and thou shalt serve  
No other God but me ;
2. Thou shalt not take God's name in vain,  
Nor swear unlawfully.
3. Remember that thou always keep  
The holy Sabbath day ;
4. Thy parents honour, serve and love,  
And cheerfully obey.
5. Thou shalt not kill, nor do those things  
Which oft to murder lead ;
6. Do not commit adultery  
By unchaste word or deed.
7. Thou shalt not steal, nor waste, nor cheat,  
And all thy debts repay ;
8. False witness thou shalt never bear,  
And calumny unsay.
9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife,  
Such sinful thoughts confess ;
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods,  
Nor aught he may possess.

We come now to speak of the giving of the Commandments on Mount Sinai.

Q. Who gave the Ten Commandments ?

A. God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses in the Old Law, and Christ confirmed them in the New.

Yes, *God gave them* to Moses and the Children of Israel

on Mount Sinai. They were spoken by the mouth of God himself in the hearing of all the people, and they were written by him afterwards on tables of stone, that the Jews might have them always before their eyes, and might not be able to plead ignorance as an excuse for breaking them. But do not think that they were given to the Jews only, or intended for them alone. They were given through the Jews to all mankind, for they contain the unchangeable law of God, which all men are equally bound to obey. Nay, even before God gave the commandments on Mount Sinai, man was still bound to keep them. But you will say, "How could he be bound to keep them, if he did not know them; and how could he know them if God had not spoken them?" My dear children, the commandments of God were engraven on the hearts of men, even before they were spoken on Mount Sinai, or written on stone tables. For when we are born, we have a *natural* knowledge of right and wrong imprinted on our souls by the hand of our Creator. We know for example, that it is wrong to steal, fight, or tell lies, and that it is right to adore God, obey our parents, and to be truthful and honest, long before any one tells us, and before we can read and learn our catechism. But how is it that we know this before we are taught it? It is by the light of our *Reason*, that noble gift which God has given to man to guide him to his duty, and by the voice of our *Conscience*. Our reason teaches us what is good and what is evil, and our conscience tells us when we do it. You have often heard, I am sure, your conscience whispering in your heart when you have done wrong, telling you that you have committed sin and offended God. How unhappy you then felt! The voice of your conscience was like a sting in your soul, making you feel wretched and miserable until you had forgotten your fault, or, what is better, had become sorry for it and come to our Blessed Lord, in the person of his priest, to confess it. On the contrary, when you had performed a good act, for example, given something to the poor, overcome a bad temper, forgiven an injury, or done a kind turn to a companion, your conscience made you feel very happy, telling

you that you had done well, and that God would reward you. You see, then, that we have got a law engraven on our hearts, teaching us our duty, as well as a law written in the Holy Scriptures. This law, which we have within us, is called the *Natural* or *Unwritten Law*, and by it the world was governed from the Creation until the time of Moses. It was this law, which caused Cain to know and feel that he had done a very wicked thing when he killed his brother Abel. It was this law which made the brothers of Joseph say to one another, when they fell into misfortune, "We deserve to suffer these things, because we have sinned against our brother Joseph" (Gen. xlii. 21). You will now understand what we mean by the *Natural* or *Unwritten*, and what by the *Written Law*. The Natural Law is the light of our reason and the voice of our conscience, which are a part of our nature, and teach us what is good or evil, and when we have done it; the Written Law teaches us the same thing in words, written by the finger of God himself.

At first, as I have told you, after the creation of the world, mankind were governed only by the Natural or Unwritten Law. Two thousand five hundred years passed away before the will of God was made known to man in express words. It is true that God did speak at times to mankind, for example, to our first parents, Adam and Eve, in the garden of Paradise, and in later years to the holy patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but it was principally to reveal by degrees the great mystery of the Incarnation of his Divine Son, by whom the world was to be saved. And when he spoke to man to reprove him for his crimes, as in the case of our first parents, and that of the murderer, Cain, he did not lay down any set commandments for man to obey, but left him still to be guided by the same Unwritten Law engraven in his heart. Unhappily, mankind, blinded by their passions, refused to be governed by this law, and gave way to the most guilty excesses. The world became steeped in sin through the universal corruption of mankind, and was by the just anger of God swept with the waters of a mighty deluge. Of all mankind, Noah and his family alone were saved, being

preserved by God in the ark which floated on the top of the angry waters. A new race of men, sprung from the three sons of Noah, now peopled the earth, but they, in like manner, shut their eyes to the light of reason, and their ears to the voice of conscience, preferring to live like beasts which have no understanding, slaves to their own appetites and passions. Almighty God then chose a single nation to preserve the knowledge of the true religion, and to hand down to future ages the promises which he had made regarding the coming of his Divine Son. This nation was that of the Jews, descended from Abraham, whom God called out of the land of Mesopotamia into that of Chanaan, which he promised to give to his descendants to be their country and abode. Very many years, however, passed away before this promise was fulfilled. During this time the Jews gradually grew into a great nation, but had no country of their own. They dwelt in the land of Egypt, where the kings, or Pharaohs, as they were called, were at first kind to them, but afterwards cruelly oppressed them. God did not, however, forget his people, or the promises which he had made to their forefathers. He sent them a deliverer in the person of Moses, and forced the Egyptians, by means of ten terrible plagues or scourges, to let the Israelites depart from their land. Moses then led them into the neighbouring desert, while the Angel of God went before them, in the form of a bright cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. Having brought them to the borders of the Red Sea, where they were closely pursued by Pharaoh and the army of the Egyptians, Moses, at the command of God, raised his wand over the waters, which immediately divided to allow a passage to the Israelites, but when they had passed through, returned to their natural course, and swallowed up the army of their pursuers. They now advanced into the sandy Desert that lay between the Red Sea and the rich and fertile land of Chanaan, which God had promised to give them. Here they began to murmur against Moses and his brother Aaron, complaining that they had led them out to starve in the wilderness. God was angry with his ungrateful people; nevertheless, in his Goodness he

worked a fresh miracle to relieve their distress. By his Almighty Power he caused a delicious food, called Manna, to be rained down each night from heaven, which continued to support them during the whole period of their wandering in the Desert. He, moreover, bade Moses strike the hard rock with his wand, and there issued forth a clear stream of water to allay their thirst.

You would imagine that after all these favours the Jews would, out of pure gratitude and love to God, have served him faithfully according to the light and knowledge which they possessed. But alas! they proved faithless to their Divine Benefactor, and preferred to follow their blind passions and sinful appetites rather than be guided by the law which he had planted in their hearts. Then it was that God determined to deliver to them his commandments in express words, and at the same time to set before them the terrible consequences of disobedience to his law, and the rich rewards which he had in store for those who faithfully observed it. Knowing the Jews, however, to be a hard-hearted and stiff-necked race, he determined to speak to them in a manner that would strike terror into their hearts, and fill them with the deepest awe and reverence. Accordingly, three months after their departure from Egypt, he assembled them at the foot of Mount Sinai, and ordered them to encamp about the mountain, but at a respectful distance. He then bade them keep three solemn days of preparation, spending the time in prayer and fasting, and purifying themselves from all uncleanness. Meanwhile, by his command, Moses drew round the foot of the holy mountain a boundary, which none were permitted to pass under pain of death.

The third day dawned, the sky was clear and serene, and the rising sun lit up with its bright rays the summit of Sinai. Suddenly, however, the scene changed; a black cloud overshadowed the mountain, dreadful peals of thunder rolled through the air, and vivid flashes of lightning sped from side to side through the gathering darkness. Then did the Lord descend in fire upon the steep summit, and call to him the prophet Moses. Mean-

while, the whole of the mountain appeared involved in thick smoke, in the midst of which an incessant stream of flames arose as from a glowing furnace. The shrill and swelling clangour of a loud trumpet was heard at the same time; the people trembled, and kept within their tents. Summoned, however, at the command of God, to stand about the foot of the mountain, they trembled still more when they heard the voice of God declaring to them, as it were in tones of thunder, the ten commandments—

“I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the Land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage.

1. *Thou shalt not have strange gods before me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them.*

2. *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that shall take the name of the Lord his God in vain.*

3. *Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.* Six days shalt thou labour and shalt do all thy works. But on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; thou shalt do no work on it, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them, and rested on the seventh day, therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it.

4. *Honour thy father and thy mother,* that thou mayest be long lived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee.

5. *Thou shalt not kill.*

6. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

7. *Thou shalt not steal.*

8. *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*

9. *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife;*

10. *Nor his house, nor his field, nor his man servant,*



nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his.

“And all the Israelites,” says the Holy Scripture, “when they heard these words, and beheld the flames, and the Mount smoking, were exceedingly terrified, and stood afar off. And they said to Moses, *Speak thou to us and we will hear, let not the Lord speak to us lest we die.* And Moses said to the people, *Fear not, for the Lord is come to prove you, and that the dread of him may be in you, and you may not sin*” (Exod. xx. ; Deut. v.).

Such, my dear children, is the account handed down to us in the Sacred Writings of the giving of the ten commandments, from which we see how important and how sacred they are, since the Great God of heaven gave them in person to mankind, and gave them in a manner so solemn and so awful. Let us bear them ever in our hearts, and show them in our conduct. Let us, with the royal prophet, frequently reflect upon them, and set them before us as the rule by which we are to form our lives. We shall find them, as he tells us, “a lamp to our feet and a light on our path” to heaven. Though hard in appearance they become sweet and easy in practice, and, what is the most consoling, they are the sure road to eternal life. Listen to what God himself said to the Jews about the care with which they should cherish and meditate upon the commandments—

“These words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart. And thou shalt tell them to thy children, and thou shalt meditate upon them, sitting in thy house, and walking on thy journey, sleeping and rising. And thou shalt bind them as a sign on thy hand, and they shall be and shall move between thy eyes. And thou shalt write them in the entry and on the doors of thy house” (Deut. vi. 7-9, and xi. 19, &c.).

But some one will perhaps say, that the commandments of God are hard and difficult to keep. I grant that they are hard ; and yet our Lord says, “My yoke is sweet, and my burden light.” What, then ! is the yoke, that is the law of God, sweet and easy too ? Yes, for our Lord says so. But how is it that the same commandments are hard

and difficult, and at the same time sweet and easy? I will tell you. They are *hard* to nature but *easy* to Divine grace. They are *difficult*, nay, impossible for man to keep if left to himself, but *easy* if assisted by Almighty God. But is God always ready to give his grace? Yes, to those who seek it. And how must we seek it? By prayer and the Sacraments. You see now why prayer and the Sacraments are so much spoken of in the catechism. They strengthen and enable us to walk in that road, which is the only one that leads to eternal life, viz., the way of the Divine commandments.

I am now going to relate to you the history of two travellers who set out together on a distant journey. You must try and find out the meaning of what I tell you.

#### STORY OF THE TWO TRAVELLERS.

Two travellers undertook a journey to a distant city. The way by which they had to travel was narrow and difficult. At one time it lay across a dreary and sandy plain, at another over desolate and rugged mountains. They had, however, the consolation of knowing that the road was a direct one, that it was perfectly safe from the attacks of robbers, and that as long as they followed the plain and easy directions with which they were furnished, they could not possibly go astray. They were, moreover, supplied with provisions and everything necessary for the journey.

Thus provided, they set out one fine Spring morning. The elder of the travellers, with staff in hand, walked steadily onwards, carrying his provisions in the wallet suspended over his back. The younger, on the contrary, stopped continually to look back or gaze about him, and, at times, cast a longing eye on a smiling tract of country which lay towards the left hand at a little distance from the road. At length he became weary of carrying his stock of provisions, and, in order to ease himself, opened his wallet and threw the contents first on one side and then on the other, until he had exhausted the whole. His companion reproved him for his folly, and warned him that he would soon stand in need of refreshment, for that the heat of the day was now approaching, and the most difficult part of the road still remained to be traversed. His young friend, however, paid no heed to his advice, and laughed at his friendly warning.

Mid-day had now arrived, and the travellers, oppressed with heat, sat down to rest and refresh themselves. The elder, who had prudently preserved his provisions, renewed his strength by a substantial meal, and was soon ready to resume his journey with fresh vigour. The younger, on the contrary, already wearied with the route, now felt faint and hungry from want of food. Having rested,

however, for a while, and swallowed a few crumbs which he found in a corner of his wallet, he rose to his feet and endeavoured to drag himself along the road, which at length brought them to the foot of the mountain. The elder traveller began vigorously to surmount the steep ascent; while the younger, at the sight of it, became thoroughly disheartened, and sat down to look about him and divert his mind from the difficulties which remained to be encountered. His eye reverted to the smiling meadows which he had before observed, and which appeared still more charming now that they were lit up by the bright rays of the mid-day sun. While thus idly gazing, he perceived a path leading from the main road to the object of his admiration. Without allowing himself a moment for reflection, he immediately rose and began to follow it. His companion, seeing him, turned and called after him: "My friend," said he, "do you not know that the road which you are quitting is the only one which will lead us to our journey's end?" "I know it," replied the other; "but I prefer those charming meadows to this rough and difficult ascent." "But," rejoined his companion, struck with amazement at his folly, "of what use will it be to you to wander through those pleasant fields, if, so far from helping you on your way, they only lead you farther from your destination?" "I grant that it will not help me on my road," returned the other, "but I do not feel able to get up this steep hill. I would sooner walk along the broad and easy path that leads to yon meadows, where I see many beautiful flowers, and shall, no doubt, find sweet and delicious fruits." "Foolish man," replied his friend, "those fruits, as you well know, contain a deadly poison, and bring certain death to whoever tastes of them; while the path you speak of leads to a frightful abyss, situated in the midst of those verdant plains."

The words of the prudent traveller were lost upon his companion. He followed the tempting path, eat of the poisonous fruits, and was seized with a fatal languor, under the influence of which he incautiously approached the brink of the abyss, and fell headlong into it. Meanwhile, his companion steadily pursued the rugged mountain path, and arrived safely, before night closed in, at the city to which he was journeying.

My dear children, do you understand the meaning of this history, which is what is called a *Parable*, that is, a story told to convey a useful lesson? You yourselves are the travellers who are journeying to a distant city, the heavenly Jerusalem. The road by which you are to arrive there—and it is the only one which leads to your journey's end—is the way of God's commandments. As long as you follow it, you are perfectly safe from all danger. The wicked spirits, who are ever watching to rob you of your treasure, the love and friendship of God, can never succeed

in doing so unless you turn aside either to the right hand or the left. Moreover, you are supplied with abundant food to support and strengthen you on the road. This food is the grace of God, which we can obtain at all times by Prayer and the Holy Sacraments. The foolish and thoughtless make little account of this food, nay, they trample it under foot by their neglect; and the consequence is, that they grow every day weaker and more languid in the service of God. They begin to cast a longing eye at the pleasures and vanities of the world, and at the first great difficulty which they meet with on their route, in spite of the voice of their own conscience, and the warnings of the ministers of God, they abandon the path of virtue, and follow the broad and easy road of their passions. Each step they take leads them further from God and nearer to the abyss of hell; but they heed it not amid the false joys and empty pleasures of a worldly life. Instead of the heavenly food of God's grace, they now nourish themselves with the forbidden fruit of sin, which produces in their souls a fatal languor and insensibility, overcome with which they at length sleep the sleep of death, and, by a just judgment of God, fall headlong into the abyss.

Meanwhile, the prudent Christian steadily pursues his path to heaven, without allowing his attention to be diverted to this side or that by the allurements of vice. Supported by the grace of God, with which he constantly nourishes his soul in prayer, and the Holy Sacraments, he surmounts all obstacles, and, persevering to the end of his life, happily arrives, when the night of death closes in, at the term of his labours, the eternal possession of God amid the joys of heaven.

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## TWENTY-THIRD INSTRUCTION.

*The First Commandment—Introduction—What it commands—Faith, Hope, Charity, and Religion—What it forbids.*

Q. What is the first Commandment?

A. The first Commandment is "I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of

bondage. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me. Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in Heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them."

It is related, my dear children, in the Holy Scripture that, when Almighty God delivered the ten commandments to the Jews on Mount Sinai, he began by uttering these solemn words, *I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage.* In this short sentence, which serves as a kind of preface or introduction to the whole, he has taught us why it is most just and reasonable that we give a willing and entire obedience to all that is contained therein.

In the first place he is *the Lord our God*, that is to say, the Great Being who created, governs, and preserves the whole universe, and who is the Supreme Lord or Master of us and of all things. For we all are the work of his Divine Hands, made out of nothing, and made for the very purpose of loving and serving him. This is one of the best and strongest motives for keeping the commandments of God; for it would be monstrous if we should refuse to obey Him who gave us our being, and who continually preserves and supports us. If *you* were to make anything, as I once told you, would you not expect it to do that for which you made it? How just, then, that you should obey God who made you out of nothing, and who made you for this very end, that you might do his Will, or, in other words, keep his commandments.

In the second place, Almighty God is not only entitled to our obedience because he is our Sovereign Lord and Master, but also because he has *brought us out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage.* You think, perhaps, that these words were spoken to the Jews only, and you are ready to acknowledge that it would have been very ungrateful of them not to keep the commandments of that Good God, who had just before brought them in safety out of a land where they had been so harshly treated, and which had been to them, in very truth, a house of cruel slavery. But, my dear children, has not God done

far more for *us* than for the Jews, and has he not, therefore, a still better right to *our* love and service? We, too, were slaves to a cruel tyrant, one far more cruel than the Egyptian Pharaoh, namely, to the devil, who kept us bound by the chains of original and actual sin; nor could we ever have recovered our liberty or entered the promised land of heaven, had not the Son of God in his Infinite Goodness, come down to redeem us with his own Blood and conduct us to eternal life. This great work of our Redemption he has accomplished by dying for us on the cross, becoming thereby our true Paschal Lamb, of which that slain by the Jews on coming out of Egypt was but a type and figure. And now he conducts us to the promised land by the guidance of the ministers of his Church, feeding us, in our passage through the desert of this life, with the heavenly manna of the B. Eucharist, and the living water of his Divine grace. Ah! if the Jews were ungrateful for not keeping the law of their Divine Benefactor, a thousand times more so are Christians if they refuse to obey the commandments of God from whom they have received still greater and more precious favours.

You see now why justice and gratitude require that we should keep the commandments of God; but there is another reason which our Lord sets before us to encourage us to observe faithfully the Divine Law. It is contained in this sentence of our B. Saviour, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*. In other words, he here declares that those, and those only, who keep his commandments shall obtain eternal life. These words were spoken by our Lord in answer to that young man who came and put to him the question, "*Good master, what good shall I do, that I may have life everlasting?*" And Jesus said to him, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*. He said to him, *Which?* And Jesus said, *Thou shalt do no murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Honour thy father and thy mother, and Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*" (Luke xviii. 19, 20). By these words our Lord has taught us that the com-

mandments are the high road to heaven. He who keeps the commandments is secure of his salvation as long as he continues to observe them ; but he who keeps them not will surely be lost, unless he returns to the right path by a true and sincere repentance.

We come now to speak of the first of the ten commandments, which teaches us to render to Almighty God the homage and worship due to him. We should not, indeed, need any commandment to induce us to offer to that Great and Infinitely Perfect Being, who created and continually preserves us, frequent acts of adoration, praise and thanksgiving ; but, alas ! man is too apt to neglect the plainest duties, and too often repays the love and blessings of God with the blackest ingratitude. This commandment recalls us to our duty ; it teaches us in what manner God requires us to worship him, and forbids us to perform any act that is contrary to the worship which we owe him.

What, then, is the first commandment? *Thou shalt not have strange gods before me.* It is Almighty God who here speaks, and he speaks to the people of Israel. As if he would say, “ *Thou, my chosen people, on whom I have bestowed so many favours, and whom I have delivered from so many evils, shalt not be guilty of the grievous sin of adoring strange gods, like the other nations around thee. Thou shalt not, like them, make to thyself any graven thing, that is, any idol, carved or moulded by the hand of man, nor the likeness or figure of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth, in other words, either of bird, or beast, or reptile. And when I forbid thee to make them, I mean that thou art not to make them for the purpose of giving them that Divine worship which is due to me alone, for thou shalt not adore them nor serve them.*” This is the great and awful commandment regarding the homage due to himself, which God gave to the Children of Israel, and gives through them to us.

You will wonder, perhaps, why the whole of the first commandment is taken up with forbidding us to commit a crime, which seems too foolish and wicked for any one

to fall into, namely, that of idolatry, or the worship of false gods and idols. The reason is, because the crime of idolatry is directly opposed to the worship of the One, True, and Living God, and also because it is the sin into which the Jews, owing to the example of the neighbouring nations, were in the greatest danger of falling. But notice that the first commandment, in forbidding us to worship *false gods*, as a matter of course commands us to worship the *True God*, and in the manner that he prescribes. It commands us to perform certain duties which we owe to God as our Sovereign Lord and Master, and it forbids us to commit certain sins opposed to those duties. It is the same way with all the other commandments—they all both *command* and *forbid*, they forbid us to commit sin and they command us to practise virtue. For it is not sufficient to *avoid evil* in order to get to heaven, we must also *do good*. There are some people who make a great mistake about this. They will say, for example, “Oh, such a person was a very good man; he never cursed or swore, he never got drunk, he never quarrelled with or cheated his neighbour; surely he is gone to heaven.” They forget that the commandments teach us to do good as well as to avoid evil. He may not have cursed or sworn; but did he go to Mass and frequent the Sacraments? He may not have been a drunkard; but did he keep the fasts of the Church? He may not have quarrelled with or cheated his neighbour; but did he relieve the poor? did he forgive his enemies? did he love his neighbour as himself? Hence our Lord tells us, that at the last day he will judge us not only for the evil we have done, but for the good we have left undone, “I was hungry and *you gave me not to eat*,” &c. (Matt. xxv. 42, &c.). And again he says in the parable, that the unprofitable servant who hid his master’s talent will be cast out into exterior darkness, not for having made a bad use of his master’s money, but for not having turned it to good account (Matt. xxv. 24, &c.). So will our B. Lord condemn us also, not only if we have abused his gifts to commit sin, but also if we have not employed them to fulfil the duties which we owe to God and our neighbour.



Listen, and I will tell you a little history, from which you will see how those who keep the commandments of God, besides securing their own salvation, are often the happy means of helping others on the way to heaven.

#### EXAMPLE THE BEST SERMON.

During the cruel persecution of the Chinese Emperor, Hien Fong, A.D. 1850, a Christian convert named Yin came to settle at the pagan town of Lo-kia-tien, where he began to work at his trade, which was that of a tile-maker. He had not received much instruction, and, though fervent and pious, was by no means clever; accordingly he made no attempt to announce the Gospel to his new neighbours. Being, however, a man of simple manners, and pure, innocent, and upright life, he preached much by his example. He heard those around him cursing and swearing, *he* never cursed any one. He saw them quarrelling and fighting, *he* was never seen in a passion or at variance with his neighbour. They got drunk, *he* was always sober. Moreover, he regularly observed certain days of fasting and abstinence, and recited without fail his morning and evening prayers.

A course of life so different to that of his neighbours excited the curiosity of some gardeners who lived near him. To satisfy themselves they came to visit him. "How is it," said they, "that you do not live as we do? You are not like us; what sort of man are you?" "I am a Christian," he replied, "and I do nothing but follow the teaching of my religion." "Your religion!" said they; "what is your religion? and what is its teaching?" Explanations followed, and his religion was acknowledged to be good because *he* was good. In a short time eighteen Pagans expressed a wish to become Christians. Yin at once sent for the Catechist of the district, who instructed and encouraged the catechumens, and assisted them to build a small chapel, where they might assemble to sanctify the Sunday and learn the truths of religion. Thus was laid the foundation of a flourishing mission, which bore good fruit the following summer, when several of the new converts suffered the most cruel torments before the tribunal of the Chinese mandarin, rather than consent to trample on the Cross of Christ.—*Annals of the Prop. of the Faith.*

We now go on to see what are the special duties enjoined by the first commandment.

Q. What are we commanded to do by the first Commandment?

A. By the first Commandment we are commanded to worship the one, true, and living God, by Faith, Hope, Charity, and Religion.

From this answer you see that there are four distinct duties taught us by the first Commandment, viz., Faith,

Hope, Charity, and Religion. In other words, we must believe in God, hope in him, love him, and render to him the homage of religious worship. Let us now see what is required of us in order to fulfil these obligations.

I. And first, what is Faith? You have already learnt that it is *a supernatural gift of God which enables us to believe without doubting whatever God has revealed*. This great virtue of Faith is the foundation of all religion, and of all the other virtues; hence it is the very first duty which God teaches us by his commandments. Faith is a gift of God, which he bestows upon us at our Baptism; by this commandment we are commanded not only to *have* faith, but to put it to a proper use. For there is a great difference between *having* faith, and *making use of* this precious gift. A man may be a carpenter by trade, but he is a worthless one, if he never handles his tools. Again, a person may be clever enough to be able to carve a statue or paint a picture, but of what use is he if he never uses his talent? So, also, a person may be a Christian by being baptized and having the gift of faith, but he is an idle unprofitable servant if he never turns this great gift to account by making acts of faith.

You will ask me, perhaps, what I mean by *acts of faith*. What is an act of faith? It is simply declaring our belief, either by word or deed, in the truths, or in any particular truth that God teaches us. For example, if you say, "O my God! I believe all that thou teachest me by thy Church," you make an act of faith in all the truths of religion; and again, if you say, "I believe that there are three persons in one God, because God has revealed it," you make an act of faith in the mystery of the B. Trinity. Moreover, if you express your belief in any truth of religion by some outward act, even though you say no words at all, you make a real act of faith in that truth. For example, if you take off your cap in passing a Catholic Church, or bend your knee before the tabernacle, you make an act of faith in the real presence of our Lord in the B. Sacrament, since by this outward act of reverence you show your belief in that mystery. And finally, if

you do all your actions in the presence of God, remembering that his Eye is always upon you, you are living in the continual exercise of the virtue of faith, for it is by faith you know that God is everywhere present, and thus, in every action you perform, there is an act of faith implied, though not expressed in words. This exercise of a continual remembrance of the presence of God is most pleasing to him, and of great profit to our souls; whence St. Paul says, that "the just man liveth by faith."

You will now understand what is meant by an act of Faith. Such acts we are bound to make frequently during our lives; to neglect to do so would be to abuse that great gift of Divine Faith which God has given us at our Baptism. Circumstances may also occur, in which the glory of God or good of our neighbour may strictly require us to make a public profession of our faith. Thus the martyrs when asked by the persecutors whether they were Christians, could not have denied the faith without incurring the guilt of grievous sin. In like manner, it would be a cowardly and criminal weakness on the part of any Catholic to try to conceal his religion through human respect, self-interest, or any other unworthy motive.

There is a beautiful example, related in Holy Scripture, of the courage with which we should profess our faith, even at the cost of our lives, when the glory of God or the good of our neighbour requires it. I mean the history of the

#### MARTYRDOM OF ELEAZAR.

During the cruel persecution with which Antiochus afflicted the Jews, in the hope of inducing them to abandon the worship of the true God, a venerable old man named Eleazar was brought before the judge and ordered to eat swine's flesh, as a proof that he abandoned the observance of the law of Moses. On his refusal, they strove to force it into his mouth, but, as he manfully resisted, preferring death to the violation of the Law, he was ordered to be led to execution. On his way, those who accompanied him, moved with pity for him and respect for his old age, took him aside, and begged him to eat at least of some food which they brought him, and which was not forbidden by the Law, that in appearance he might be considered to have obeyed the king's orders, and so save his life. But he bravely made answer, "It doth not become our age to dissemble, whereby many young persons might think that

Eleazar, at the age of fourscore and ten years, was gone over to the life of the heathens ; and so they, through my dissimulation, should be deceived, and hereby should bring a curse and stain upon my old age. For though, for the present time, I should be delivered from the punishments of men, yet should I not escape the hand of the Almighty, neither alive nor dead." Having spoken thus, he was forthwith carried to execution. But when he was now ready to die with stripes, he groaned and said, "Oh Lord ! thou knowest that, whereas I might be delivered from death, I suffer grievous pains in body, but in soul am well content to suffer these things, because I fear thee." Thus did he die, leaving to the whole nation an example of virtue and fortitude (2 Mach. vi.).

#### HEROIC FAITH OF A CHILD.

In the year 1833, a violent persecution was raised against the Church by the tyrant Minh-Menh, king of Tong-Quin and Cochin China, and vast numbers were cruelly tortured and put to death for the faith. The Christians exhibited the most heroic constancy ; even the very children nobly confessed the faith, and offered themselves to the judges to receive the crown of martyrdom.

One day a little boy, ten years old, presented himself at the tribunal. Throwing himself on his knees before the judge, he joined his hands, and asked permission to speak. "Mandarin," said he, "give me a cut with a sabre that I may go to my own country." "Where is your country?" said the judge. "It is in heaven," replied the child. "And where are your parents?" "They are gone to heaven, and I want to follow them. Give me a stroke with the sabre, and send me there." The mandarin was struck with admiration at the faith and courage of the child, but refused to grant his request. We may well believe that in after years this generous confessor of the faith took his place among that noble band of martyrs, who have since watered the soil of Tong-Quin with a continuous stream of blood.—*Annals of Prop. of Faith.*

II. The second duty which we are taught by the first commandment to practise, is that of *hoping* in God ; in other words Almighty God commands us not only to believe in him, but to place in him all our trust and confidence. *Hope*, my dear children, follows close upon Faith ; for it is what we believe about God which causes us to hope in him. Faith teaches us that God is All-powerful and can do whatever he pleases, also that he is infinitely Good and Merciful, and finally, that he has promised to hear our prayers, and grant us whatever is necessary for our salvation, if we make use of the proper means to obtain it. *Therefore* we hope in him ; we trust to his Goodness,

we rely on his Power, we place an unbounded confidence in his Divine promises. It is this beautiful virtue of Hope which comforts us in all our troubles, which supports us in all our trials and temptations. Without it the world would indeed be a dreary desert ; while hell itself would be robbed of half its terrors, if Hope could ever enter into that abode of torments.

The virtue of Hope, like that of Faith, is implanted in our souls by the ever-Blessed Trinity at our Baptism, but we are bound by this commandment to cherish, preserve, and increase it by continual acts. Thus it is our duty to make acts of Hope as well as of Faith frequently in the course of our lives. We are also bound to make an act of Hope whenever we are tempted against this virtue, for example, in temptations to despair, and indeed whenever we are in danger of being overcome by any strong temptation, since it is by God's help only that we can expect to secure the victory. Notice, however, that we *do* make an act of Hope whenever we ask God's help, for why do we ask it, except that we *hope* to obtain it because he is able and willing, and has promised to grant it?

III. We come now to speak of the third duty prescribed by the first commandment, namely, *Charity*, that is, the love of God above all things, and of our neighbour as ourselves for the sake of God. This virtue of Charity, my dear children, is of all others the most noble and excellent. It is by Faith that we submit our understanding to God, but it is by Charity that we unite to him our *heart* and our *will*, which are the most noble part of our being. To love God and our neighbour is a strict duty, because God has so commanded us, but it is also a supreme honour and the source of all happiness. Hence St. Augustine beautifully cries out, "What art thou to me, O God, and what am I to thee, that thou shouldst command me to love thee, and shouldst be angry with me if I do not love thee, and shouldst threaten me with great miseries ! Is it then a small misery not to love thee ?" Yes, it is indeed true that not to love God is the greatest misery that can befall us.

This beautiful virtue of Charity is implanted in our souls at Baptism, along with the virtues of Faith and Hope, and we are bound by the first commandment continually to exercise it during our lives. It is our duty, indeed, to make acts of the love of God more frequently than acts of Faith or Hope, because it is a nobler virtue, unites us more closely with God, and we have, moreover, received a special commandment to practise it. Thus Almighty God said to the Jews in the Old Law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength." And our B. Saviour, repeating the same to his disciples, declares that in the love of God and our neighbour are contained the whole Law and the Prophets, that is, the whole of the commandments which God has made known to man. Hence we are bound to make very frequent acts of this virtue. You need not however, at least if you are trying to be good, have any doubt about your fulfilment of this duty, for you do make an act of the love of God, not only when you say the Act of Charity in the prayer book, but also when you do anything to please God, when you make an act of sorrow for offending him, and when you bear any trial or suffering with patience for his sake. For in all these things there is an act of the love of God implied, though not expressed, since his love is the motive through which you do them. In like manner you make acts of the love of your neighbour when you forgive injuries, when you relieve others in distress, or do them any act of kindness—as long at least, as you do these things for the sake of God. Thus, you see, we may be making acts of the love of God and our neighbour all the day through, though we may not be thinking of doing so, or use any form of words. It is useful, however, often to make direct acts of Divine Love, such as, "O, my Jesus! I love thee," or, "O, my God! I love thee with my whole heart, and for thy sake I love my neighbour as myself." We should also frequently ask of God to give us the grace of his holy love, saying to him, for example, when the clock strikes, "O my God, teach me to love thee in time and eternity."

Thus will the flame of Divine Love burn each day more brightly in our hearts, cleansing us more and more from sin and urging us on in the practice of good works.

IV. The fourth and last duty which we are here commanded to practise is that of *Religion*, which means the worship of God by prayer, sacrifice, and other sacred and devout actions. The duty of worshipping God is so deeply imprinted on the heart of man by God himself, that there has never been found a people or nation, who, however much they may have erred about the nature of God, have failed to follow some form of *Religious Worship*. For Almighty God being the Creator of all things, and the Sovereign Lord and Master of the universe, it stands to reason that we should adore him as such, praise and glorify him for his Infinite Perfections, thank him for his blessings, and implore from him those graces which we stand in need of. Now it is in these four acts, namely, in adoration, praise, thanksgiving and supplication, that Religious Worship consists. The most perfect way of worshipping God is by the *Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, because in the Mass we offer to God his own Divine Son, who alone can adore, praise, and thank him as he deserves, and whose supplications for man, being of infinite value, cannot fail to be heard. But as we cannot be always hearing Mass, we are also bound to render to God the worship due to him by frequent *prayer*, which we offer in the name of Jesus Christ, and in union with his merits. For it is only by the merits of our B. Lord that our prayers become pleasing to God, so pleasing indeed, that they cannot fail to be heard, if offered with proper dispositions. We are commanded, therefore, by the first commandment, to *pray*, and to pray often. Without God's grace we can neither do any good action nor be preserved from sin, and without prayer we cannot hope to obtain his grace. Prayer is thus, as it were, the support and nourishment of the soul, without which it would soon grow faint and languid, and die the death of sin. Hence we are taught from our infancy to worship God each day of our lives by morning and evening prayer. Be faithful, my

dear children, to this important duty, and try to perform it with attention and devotion. If you always say your morning and night prayers, and say them well, you may be sure that the blessing of God will attend you both day and night, that you will be preserved from innumerable sins, and receive many precious graces, of which you would otherwise be deprived.

There is another duty connected with the worship of God, which we are bound by this commandment to fulfil, viz., that of *receiving the Holy Sacraments*, and receiving them worthily. It is by the Sacraments that we are cleansed from sin, united to God, and provided with abundance of grace for the performance of all our duties. I will say no more, however, about the Holy Sacraments now, because we shall speak about them later in another part of the catechism.

Q. What is forbidden by the first Commandment?

A. All sins against Faith, Hope, Charity, and Religion, are forbidden by the first Commandment.

We come next to speak of the sins forbidden by the first commandment. They are, each of them, opposed to one or other of the duties which it enjoins. Hence, in preparing for confession, if you wish to find out what sins you have committed against the first commandment, you have nothing to do but to think of these four duties, and see whether you have fulfilled them or done anything contrary to them. Thus, for example, if you have neglected to learn your catechism or denied your religion, you have sinned against the virtue of Faith; if you have despaired of God's mercy, you have sinned against Hope; and so of the rest. Next time we shall speak more particularly of the sins opposed to each of these different virtues.

I have explained to you carefully, my dear children, the meaning and obligation of the different duties, Faith, Hope, Charity, and Religion, which are imposed upon us by the first commandment. If you wish to see an excellent example of the fulfilment of these duties, you will find it in the life of holy King David.



## DAVID, A MODEL OF EVERY VIRTUE.

King David, of whom the Sacred Scripture says, that he was "a man according to God's own heart," fulfilled, in an eminent degree, the fourfold duty of the first commandment. His lively *faith* made him ever walk in the presence of God, look upon himself as the humblest of his servants, and deem himself happy in being able to contribute to the dignity and splendour of his worship. When his wife Michol mocked and derided him for dancing before the Ark on its entrance into Jerusalem, he made her this beautiful answer, "Before God I will both play and make myself meaner than I have done, and I will be little in my own eyes" (2 Kings vi. 21, 22). His *faith* taught him that it was a greater honour to assist, in the most humble capacity, in the solemn services of religion, than to be the ruler of the kingdom of Israel.

*Hope*, or confidence in God, is the natural consequence of a lively *faith*. David's *faith* in the Divine Goodness and Power led him to throw himself into the arms of Providence with the most unbounded confidence. "The Lord is my protector," he says, "and I have hoped in him" (Ps. cxliii. 2). "In God have I hoped, and I will not fear what man can do to me" (Ps. lv. 11). Behold him, in his youth, advancing to the combat with the mighty giant Goliath, "Thou comest against me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts" (1 Kings xvii. 45). Behold him also fleeing from the pursuit of Saul, or, in his old age, again a wanderer in the desert, while his son Absalom usurps his throne. Never, for a moment, does he waver in his unbounded confidence in the Divine Goodness and Providence.

The flames of Divine *love* burnt also brightly in the heart of David. His psalms and canticles are full of the sweetest expressions of praise, gratitude, and love to God. "As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so my soul panteth after thee, O God" (Ps. xli. 1). And again, "What have I in heaven, and besides thee what do I desire on earth? For thee my flesh and my heart hath fainted away: thou art the God of my heart, and my portion for ever" (Ps. lxxii. 25, 26). Tender, gentle, and compassionate to all, David showed the sincerity of his love to God by his love of his neighbour. When Almighty God had sent a severe scourge upon the people, in punishment for David's sin, the latter wept bitter tears over their affliction, and besought God to spare them, begging him rather to turn the arm of his indignation upon himself, who was alone guilty.

Finally, where shall we find a man more zealous for the worship of God, more faithful in prayer, more exact in the duties of *religion*, than holy David? "O Lord," said he, "I have loved the beauty of thy house, and the place where thy glory dwelleth" (Ps. xxiii. 8). "Better is one day in thy courts above thousands" (Ps. lxxxiii. 11). And again, "Seven times in the day I have given praise to thee.

I meditated on thy commandments which I loved. In the night I have remembered thy name. I rose at midnight to give praise to thee. I prevented the dawning of the day that I might meditate on thy words" (Ps. cxviii.). Could we have a more perfect model of a life of prayer?

Another beautiful example of the practice of the duties of the first commandment will be found in the life of the virtuous Tobias.

#### HISTORY OF TOBIAS.

Tobias was one of the Israelites carried into captivity to Nineve by the Assyrian king, Teglathphalasar. Though involved in the ruin of his country, he was no sharer in the crime of his people, for the Scripture says of him, that, "when all went to the golden calves which Jeroboam, king of Israel, had made, he alone fled the company of all, and went to Jerusalem to the temple of the Lord, and there adored the Lord God of Israel, offering faithfully all his first fruits and his tithes" (Tobias i. 5, 6).

In a strange land, and in the midst of an idolatrous nation, Tobias continued equally firm in his faith, and faithful to the practice of his religion. While the companions of his exile fell away from their duty, and, contrary to the command of the Jewish law, "eat of the meats of the Gentiles, *he* kept his soul," as the Scripture tells us, "and never was defiled with their meats" (Tobias i. 12).

The virtues of Tobias, and his faithful observance of the duties of his religion, excited the admiration and gained for him the favour of the Assyrian king, who granted him a degree of liberty that was not allowed to the other captives. Tobias availed himself of this advantage to relieve his afflicted brethren. "He daily went among his kindred and comforted them, and distributed to every one as he was able out of his goods. He fed the hungry, and gave clothing to the naked, and was careful to bury the dead and those that were slain" (Tobias i. 19, 20). These works of mercy drew upon him the displeasure of Sennacherib, who had now succeeded to the throne. He ordered Tobias to be slain, and took away his substance. Tobias, however, escaped with his life, and remained in concealment till the king's death, after which he continued to practise the same works of mercy towards his suffering countrymen, undeterred by the danger he had run, or the prudent advice of his friends, for, as the Holy Scripture says, "he feared God more than the king" (Tobias ii. 9).

We have seen Tobias firm and steadfast in his Faith, faithful to the duties of his Religion, and zealous in the performance of works of Charity. But a new trial now awaited him, to put to the test his hope and trust in God. Wearied with his labours in burying the dead, he laid himself down one day to rest beneath the wall of his house. As he was sleeping, the hot dung from a swallow's nest fell

upon his eyes, and deprived him of his sight. Far from murmuring and repining under this severe trial, he bore it with invincible patience, and, like holy Job, thanked God in the midst of his affliction. The insults of his friends and the reproaches of his wife did not disturb the peace of his soul. When asked by them, in derision, "where was now the hope for which he had given alms and buried the dead?" he made them this noble answer, "Speak not so; we are the children of the saints, and look for that life which God will give to those who never change their faith from him" (Tobias ii. 15, &c.).

The virtues of Tobias were not left, even in this life, without their reward. The great Archangel, St. Raphael, was sent from heaven to be the guide and protector of the young Tobias, and to heal and comfort his aged father. Restored to sight, Tobias lived happily for many years in the bosom of his family, until at length, at an extreme old age, rich in virtue and full of good works, he went to receive the reward which God has promised to his faithful servants.—*Tobias.*

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## TWENTY-FOURTH INSTRUCTION.

*The First Commandment continued—What it forbids—Sins against Faith—Idolatry, False Religions, Disbelief, Culpable Ignorance and Wilful Exposure to Temptation—Sins against Hope—Presumption and Despair—Sins against Charity—Sins against Religion—Superstition, Sacrilege, and Simony.*

We come now to speak of the sins which are forbidden by the first commandment, and which, as I told you, are all opposed to one or other of the four duties: Faith, Hope, Charity, and Religion, which we are enjoined by this commandment to practise. We shall first speak of the sins which are opposed to the virtue of Faith, and afterwards of those which are contrary to the other duties.

**Q.** What sins against Faith are forbidden by the first Commandment?

**A.** The sins against Faith forbidden by the first Commandment are the worship of false gods or idols, and the giving to any creature whatsoever the honour which belongs to God alone.

The first sin here mentioned is the grievous crime of *Idolatry*, which is, as the catechism says, *the worship of*

*false gods or idols, and the giving to any creature the honour which belongs to God alone.* This heinous sin is directly opposed to the two duties of Faith and Religion; for by the one we are bound to *believe* in one only True and Living God, and by the other to *worship* him in the manner which he has taught us. Idolatry is a sin, my dear children, which happily you are in no danger of committing, enlightened as you are by the light of Faith, and the teaching of the Church of God. It is a crime, however, which was very common before the coming of our B. Redeemer, and which even yet exists in many parts of the world. You would think, perhaps, that no one can be so foolish as to worship, as gods, images made of wood or of stone, which, as the Holy Scripture says, can neither see, nor hear, nor help us (Ps. cxiii. 5, &c.), but alas! there is no crime, however much it may be opposed to reason or the Divine teaching, of which man, when blinded by his passions, is not capable. After our first parents, Adam and Eve, had fallen into sin, and had been driven out of the Garden of Paradise, their descendants soon became corrupt, and gave way to grievous crimes and excesses. In punishment of their wickedness God permitted them to fall into deplorable ignorance. They lost the knowledge of the true God, and began to worship as gods the very creatures which God had made for their use and benefit. At one time they adored the sun, the moon, and the stars; at another the earth and the sea; at another their fellow-men; and sometimes even the very animals and vegetables. Then, as if these false gods were not enough, they made for themselves figures or images of clay, of wood, of stone, or of metal, and set them up, and adored them. Thus were they guilty of a most grievous outrage against the Divine Majesty, for what could be more heinous than to turn the gifts of God against the giver, and to set up as gods, creatures made by the hand of God, and made for the use of man!

Such was the unhappy condition of mankind before the coming of our B. Redeemer, who, by his own Divine teaching and that of his Apostles, has scattered the dark cloud of ignorance with which the whole world was

covered before his coming. For at that time the Jews were the only people who preserved the knowledge and worship of the true God; the Gentiles, that is, all other nations, were buried in the darkness of idolatry. Now *we* are the children of the Gentiles, and if we enjoy the blessing of the true faith, it is to the Infinite Goodness of our dear Lord and the merits of his bitter Passion and Death that we owe this greatest of all graces. Let us frequently thank him for it, and pray that he will extend the same blessing to those nations among whom idolatry still exists, bringing them by his all-powerful grace, and the preaching his zealous missionaries, into the bosom of his Church.

I will now relate to you the beautiful history of St. Eustachius, who, with his wife and children, suffered a most cruel martyrdom rather than be guilty of an act of idolatry.

#### MARTYRDOM OF ST. EUSTACHIUS.

In the reign of the Emperor Trajan there lived at Rome a nobleman named Eustachius, who was no less renowned for his birth and riches than for his courage and military exploits. One day while engaged in hunting, he was favoured with the vision of an image of our Lord crucified, which appeared to him darting forth bright rays of light between the antlers of the stag that he was pursuing. At the same time he heard a voice saying that, if he wished for happiness, he must abandon the worship of idols, and seek for instruction in the truths of the Christian religion.

Eustachius, being converted by this vision, was baptized with his whole family, but soon after began to experience the displeasure of the Roman Emperor. Stripped of his vast possessions and reduced to a state of extreme poverty, he was compelled to withdraw to a distant spot, where God tried him still further by the loss of his wife and children, who were separated from him by sudden and unforeseen disasters.

In the meantime, the Roman army, pressed by the enemy, bewailed the loss of their favourite general, and loudly clamoured for his recall. The Emperor at length consented, and Eustachius was sought for and discovered in his retreat, where he was quietly employed in the pursuit of husbandry. At the Emperor's command he again put himself at the head of the troops, and led them once more to victory. Eustachius was now restored to his former high position, and, being again united to his wife and children, whom he had long believed to have perished, nothing seemed wanting to complete his happiness. Meanwhile the victory was celebrated with great rejoicings, and Eustachius was ordered by the Emperor

to take part with his troops in the idolatrous sacrifices, which were offered in thanksgiving to the false gods of the country. Eustachius firmly refused, for he well knew that he owed a higher duty to God than to any earthly monarch. In vain did the Emperor strive alternately to win him by promises or to terrify him by threats, he remained unshaken in his resolution, and nobly declared that he was ready to die rather than sacrifice to idols. The Emperor, enraged, ordered him, along with his wife and children, to be thrown to the lions, but, as these savage beasts refused to touch them, he commanded that they should be shut up in the body of a brazen bull, which should be placed, until it became red hot, over a glowing fire. The sentence was executed, and Eustachius and his family, singing the praises of God to their latest breath, like the three children in the fiery furnace, accomplished in this manner their glorious martyrdom.—*Roman Breviary*, Sept. 20.

Q. What other sins against Faith are forbidden by this Commandment?

A. All false religions, wilful disbelief or doubt of any article of Faith, and also culpable ignorance of the doctrines of the Church, are forbidden by the first Commandment.

Q. How do we expose ourselves to the danger of losing our Faith?

A. We expose ourselves to the danger of losing our Faith by the neglect of our spiritual duties, by reading bad books, by listening to false teachers, or by taking part in the services or prayers of a false religion.

As the first commandment commands us to believe without doubting all that God has taught us by his holy Church, and to worship him in the manner that he has appointed, it consequently forbids *all false religions*, as well as *all wilful disbelief*, and even a *wilful doubt* of any doctrine which the Church proposes to our belief. These three sins are all opposed to the virtue of Faith, and the first of them, namely, false religions, is also contrary to the duty of Religious Worship. All these sins are very grievous in the sight of God, as they are a direct rebellion against his teaching.

But what do we mean by *false religions*, which is the first of the three sins here mentioned? We mean of course every religion, except the true religion established by Jesus Christ, namely the One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. For it is the Church which God has appointed to teach all nations what they are to believe about him, and how they are to worship him. Moreover,

it is to the pastors of the Church that our Lord has said, "He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me" (Luke x. 16), and in another place, "If any man will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican" (Matt. xviii. 17). Whoever therefore follows any other religion, except the religion or Church established by Christ, despises the teaching of our Lord, and strays from the one road that leads to eternal life. Hence we ought to be ready to make every sacrifice, and suffer everything rather than abandon our religion, or take part in any other form of worship. Thus, for example, no human motive, such as the fear of offending others, or the hope of obtaining any temporal advantage, should be able to induce us to deny our faith, to attend a Protestant church, or to take part in the services or prayers of any other religion than our own. Were we to act otherwise, we should be unworthy of the name of Catholics, and should disgrace the memory of our forefathers, who willingly sacrificed their fortunes and their liberty, and cheerfully underwent the most cruel tortures, nay, even death itself, rather than abandon their faith or conform to a false worship. Listen while I tell you what one of them had to undergo less than three hundred years ago, simply for confessing to a Catholic priest, and refusing to attend Protestant service. It is but one example taken out of hundreds.

#### HISTORY OF JOHN RIGBY.

Among the glorious martyrs who suffered for the faith during the cruel persecution of Queen Elizabeth, was a Lancashire gentleman of a good but reduced family, named John Rigby. Having been obliged in consequence of his straitened circumstances to take service in a gentleman's household, he was unhappily prevailed upon through fear and human respect to frequent occasionally the Protestant church. At a later period, entering into himself, he bitterly bewailed his past weakness, and was reconciled to God in the Sacrament of Penance by the Rev. Mr. Jones, at that time a prisoner for the Faith. Some time afterwards, having occasion to present himself at the Old Bailey to answer for his mistress who had been summoned on grounds of religion, but was unable through sickness to appear, he was himself charged with being a Catholic, which he gladly acknowledged, and was accordingly condemned to death in virtue of a law lately enacted, which made

it treason to be reconciled to God by the ministry of a Catholic priest.

Upon hearing his sentence read, which condemned him to be hung, cut down alive, bowelled and quartered, he cried out with great joy, "Thanks be to God. It is all but one death, and a flea-bite in comparison of that which it pleased my sweet Saviour Jesus to suffer for my salvation." Though he was repeatedly offered his life in case he would consent to go to the Protestant church, he always courageously refused, saying, "It is not lawful, and I will not go. I desire and look for the day of my execution, but think myself unworthy to die for so good a cause."

It is related in the history of his trial that upon one occasion the judge ordered him to be loaded with a pair of heavy shackles. The shackles being brought, the holy confessor of the faith kissed them, and signed them with the sign of the cross before they were riveted about his legs. After he had stood in them awhile the irons fell to the ground, at which he smiled, and bade his keeper rivet them on faster. Soon after they again fell off, upon which he told them to make them faster still, "for," said he, "I esteem them as jewels too precious to be lost." This extraordinary circumstance he looked upon as a token that his soul should soon be set free from the prison of the body. And so in fact it happened, for his execution, which had been long delayed, took place two days afterwards.

Having arrived at the place appointed for his execution, which was in Southwark, near the river Thames, he knelt down and recited aloud the Our Father, Hail Mary, I believe, and I confess. He then mounted the cart, and, making the sign of the cross, kissed the rope which the executioner adjusted to his neck. To the latter he gave a piece of gold, saying, "Take this as a token that I freely forgive thee." No sooner was he turned off the cart, than he was immediately cut down, and standing on his feet, exclaimed, "God forgive you. Jesus, receive my soul." He was then thrown to the ground, and one of his murderers placed his foot upon his neck, while his body was ripped open, and his heart and bowels were torn out. Thus did this noble and generous soul, this faithful imitator of his Divine Master, accomplish his glorious sacrifice.—*Challoner's Missionary Priests.*

Let us, my dear children, never fall off from the noble example of our forefathers, but be ready, like them, to make every sacrifice for that faith which they have preserved to us at the price of so many sufferings. Let us often say from our hearts, in the beautiful words of our hymn—

"Faith of our fathers, holy faith !  
We will be true to thee till death."

The second sin mentioned in this answer is the sin of *disbelief*, which is a refusal to believe any of the truths



revealed by God to man, and proposed to our belief by the Church. To call in question any particular truth taught by the Church is the sin of *heresy*; to deny all revealed truth is the still more grievous crime of *infidelity*. You can easily understand how great a sin it must be to deny anything which God, who is Truth itself, has taught to man. Such an act is a direct rebellion of the understanding against God, and can only spring from an excess of human pride. The infidel and heretic set up their own weak and erring judgments in opposition to Divine Revelation, and prefer their own ignorance to the Divine Wisdom. The heart of man must be very corrupt to fall into such an excess of pride and folly. Indeed we find that those who have made profession of infidelity have been, for the most part, men of the most abandoned lives; and that those who have fallen away from the Church, by the denial of any of her doctrines, have done so for the sake of some worldly motive, or in order to indulge their passions more easily, by throwing off the restraints of religion. Thus did the wicked king Henry VIII. deny that the successor of St. Peter was the head of the Church, and compel his subjects, under pain of death, to do the same, because the Pope would not allow him to break the Law of God by marrying a second wife while the first was living.

Another sin which is directly opposed to the virtue of Faith is all *wilful doubt* of any revealed truth. For if it is forbidden to *disbelieve* a doctrine, it is no less forbidden to *doubt* of it, since faith requires that we should firmly hold fast, without a moment's hesitation, what God teaches and the Church proposes. But notice, my dear children, that it is one thing for a doubt to enter into our minds, and another for us to give way to it. What is forbidden by this commandment is a *wilful* doubt; that is, a doubt which comes into our mind and which we do not put away when we notice it, but which we dwell upon on purpose. If we dislike these doubts, and do our best not to think of them, we do not commit any sin, but, on the contrary, gain great merit. We are forbidden, however, to do anything which might bring these doubts into our

mind, for example, to read Protestant or irreligious books, to go to Protestant schools, or to frequent the company of those who talk against or mock at our religion. For our faith is a precious gift of God, which we are bound, by every means in our power, to guard and cherish. Sometimes you will meet with deluded but well-meaning persons, who will offer to give or lend you religious tracts or Protestant Bibles. Be always firm in refusing to receive them. Tell these persons that Catholics have books and Bibles of their own, and that you have no need of theirs. If they offer you, along with the books, clothes or money, say that you value your faith too highly to sell it for any temporal advantage. Esteem yourselves happy in being able to make a sacrifice, however small, for your faith, and doubt not that God will reward it. Finally, never forget the words of our B. Redeemer, "Every one that shall confess me before men I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven. But he that shall deny me before men I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven."

Finally, the catechism teaches you in this answer that all *culpable ignorance of the doctrines of the Church* is likewise forbidden by the first commandment. By *culpable* ignorance we mean ignorance which arises from our own fault, for where there is no fault on our own part there can be no sin in the sight of God. On the other hand, he who wilfully neglects to be instructed in the truths of religion when he has the means and opportunity, sins against the virtue of Faith, for the obligation which we are under of believing what God has taught us, necessarily carries with it the obligation of knowing what those truths are which we are bound to believe. This neglect of religious instruction may easily amount to a mortal sin, as for example in the case of those who through their own fault grow up in ignorance of the four great necessary truths of religion, namely, that there is One God, that there are three Persons in God, that God the Son died to save us, and that God will one day reward the good and punish the wicked. But besides these four great and *necessary truths*, there are certain other things in which it is the duty of every Christian to be instructed,

insomuch so that whoever remains wilfully ignorant of them commits a grievous sin and cannot be admitted to the Sacraments. Thus everybody is strictly bound to know,

1. The Commandments of God and those of the Church which especially concern him.

2. The particular duties of his state of life.

3. The seven Sacraments and the meaning of them, especially of those which he is bound to receive, namely, Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, and Penance.

4. The Our Father, Hail Mary, and I believe.

These, my dear children, are the most important parts of your instruction, but you ought also to obtain a fuller knowledge of your religion as far as opportunity is afforded you. If, therefore, you neglect to learn your catechism, stay away from instruction, or do not attend to it, you are guilty of a sin against the first commandment of which you should accuse yourselves in confession. To neglect to learn all that we can about God and the truths that he teaches us, would be an act of ingratitude to him who has given us the gift of faith, and who has caused us, in preference to millions of others, to be born of Catholic parents and to be made by Baptism members of the one Church, which his Divine Son has established upon earth to teach us the way to heaven. Let us rather thank God for so great a grace, and show our gratitude to him by our eagerness to learn and readiness to profit by the Divine truths which he has taught us.

Q. What are the sins against Hope which the first Commandment forbids?

A. The sins against Hope are despair and presumption.

We come now to speak of the sins opposed to the virtue of Hope, which are two in number, *Despair* and *Presumption*. The one is the want of Hope, the other the excess of it, and all sins against this virtue may be reduced to one or other of these two heads.

What, then, is *Despair*? It is the giving up of all Hope, and it is a most heinous sin, because it is a denial, by deed, of the Infinite Mercy and Power of God and of the truth of his Divine Promises. Thus, a person who

Despairs of obtaining pardon for his sins, or of being able to overcome temptation, shows that he no longer believes in the Goodness and Promises of God, or in the Power of his Divine Grace. It was into this terrible sin that the murderer Cain fell, when he said in his heart, "My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon;" and it was in this way that the devil deceived the traitor Judas to his ruin, when he tempted him to give up all hope and end his miserable life by his own hand.

I have told you that Despair is the *want* of Hope; *Presumption*, on the other hand, is the *excess* of it. In other words, it is hoping either that God will give us what we have no right to expect, or that he will give us what we may indeed hope for, but without our taking the proper means to obtain it. Now this is hoping *too much*. God has promised only to give us what is good for us, and this on condition that we take those means to obtain it which he has provided. For example, he has promised to give us grace to overcome temptation, but he has not promised us the gift of working miracles or speaking in strange languages. For these gifts are not necessary, and, most probably, would not be good for us; therefore it would be Presumption to expect them. Again, he usually requires certain conditions on our own part before he grants us what is really good for us, so that if a person, for example, were to hope to keep from sin without praying to God for his grace, and avoiding dangerous occasions, or, if he were to expect pardon for his sins without going to Confession, he would be guilty of the sin of Presumption, in hoping for these graces without doing what God requires of him.

We have now gone through the different sins which are mentioned in the catechism as opposed to the virtues of Faith and Hope, and we proceed to speak of those which are contrary to the virtue of Religion. But how is it that the sins against Charity find no place in the catechism? My dear children, they do find a place; for every other sin which is spoken of, no matter by what commandment it is forbidden, is opposed either to the love of God or the love of our neighbour. Therefore, it is not necessary to mention them here in particular. I may

remark, however, that if we love riches, honours or pleasures more than God, we do not fulfil the duty of Charity, since by it we are bound to love God *above all things*. Again, if we never thank God for his benefits, if we never seek to please him, if we murmur at the trials and sufferings which he sends us, we sin against that tender love which he bears us. Of the other sins which are opposed to the twofold duty of Charity, we shall come to speak under the different Commandments.

Q. Does the first Commandment forbid dealing with the devil, and superstition?

A. Yes; the first Commandment forbids all dealing with the devil and superstitious practices, such as consulting spiritualists and fortune-tellers, and trusting to charms, omens, dreams, and such like fooleries.

The sins which are included in this answer are all opposed to the fourth duty of the first commandment, namely Religion. For they all tend to rob God of the religious worship which is due to him, and to set up a false worship in its stead. Hence, they may be all included under the common name of *superstition*, by which we mean a "false worship rendered to God or his creatures." We give a false and superstitious worship to God when we worship him in a manner contrary to his revealed Will; and we give a false worship to his creatures when we show them an honour and reverence which is due to God alone, or seek to obtain from them what we ought to look for only from God. Thus you see that idolatry is a kind of superstition, since by it we give Divine honour to idols or other things, which are only the creatures of God; and the sins here mentioned are also forms of superstition, since by them we try to obtain from creatures help or knowledge which depend on God alone.

The first sin here spoken of, namely, *dealing with the devil*, is so heinous a crime that the very name of it is sufficient to inspire us with horror. For what greater wickedness can we imagine than for man, the creature of God, redeemed by the Blood of the Son of God, and receiving daily innumerable blessings from the hand of

God, to seek to have any dealings with that wicked spirit who rose in rebellion against God, and is ever striving that God may be dishonoured and that man, for whom the Son of God died, may be eternally lost. And yet, alas ! there have been found men who, by giving way to their passions and vices, have at length arrived at such a height of wickedness as to give themselves up, body and soul, to the power of this wicked spirit, in the hope of obtaining from him what a Good and Loving God thought well to refuse them. Such a one was the magician Simon, who lived at the time of the Apostles, and whose history I will relate to you, for it will show you how the devil, who was a liar from the beginning, always deceives to their ruin those unhappy men who, abandoning the protection of God, put themselves, of their own accord, in the power of their most bitter enemy.

#### SIMON THE MAGICIAN.

One of the earliest converts to the Christian faith, in the time of the Apostles, was a celebrated sorcerer or magician of the name of Simon. Having seen the miracles worked by the Apostles, and in particular the visible signs which frequently followed the conferring of the Sacrament of Confirmation, he came to St. Peter, offering a sum of money, and saying, "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I also lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost." But St. Peter said to him, "Keep thy money to thyself, to perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money. Do penance for this thy wickedness, and pray to God, if perchance the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee." Simon, thus baffled in his design, shortly after abandoned the Christian religion.

Giving himself up entirely to the practice of the magic arts, he now entered into a compact with the devil, who assisted him to perform various wonderful feats, which caused his fame to reach the ears of the Emperor Nero. In order to eclipse, if possible, the fame of the miracles of the Apostles, he engaged to fly through the air in presence of Nero and his whole court, on condition that St. Peter, who presented himself in the amphitheatre, was securely bound during the performance. This being done, he began by means of the magical arts, which God permitted to have effect for his greater confusion and punishment, to mount into the air, promising the people, as he ascended, that he would shower down upon them good things from heaven. His momentary success was loudly applauded by the spectators, who clapped their hands, and raised shouts of exulta-

tion. Hereupon St. Peter, pitying their blindness, betook himself to prayer, earnestly beseeching God to confound the efforts of the devil, and not to permit him to obtain so signal a triumph. At the same moment Simon, abandoned by the wicked spirits that held him, fell with a loud crash upon the ground, amid the laughter and derision of the populace. In his fall he broke both his legs, "so that he," says St. Maximus, "who had undertaken to fly in the air, in a short time was not able to walk on the ground."—*Butler's Lives of the Saints*.

The next sin here mentioned is that of *consulting spiritualists*. By spiritualists we mean people who pretend to hold communication with the spirits or souls of the dead. To attempt such a thing is a crime strictly forbidden by Almighty God in the Sacred Writings. Let there be no one, he said, among you "that consulteth fortune-tellers, or that seeketh truth from the dead; for the Lord abhorreth all these things" (Deut. xviii. 11, 12). So great is the horror of these crimes with which Almighty God sought to inspire the Israelites, that he calls such practices *abominable* in his sight, and ordered all those who practised these forbidden acts to be put to death without mercy, "Dying, let them die; they shall stone them, and their blood shall be upon them" (Lev. xx. 27). Yet, would you believe it? these superstitious practices of pagan times have been revived in this nineteenth century, which talks so loudly of its enlightenment, by the so-called *mediums* of spiritualism, who boast of being able to converse with the spirits of the departed, and even to make their presence sensible to the touch, the hearing, and the eyes of others! My dear children, you will easily see that, to take any part in practices so abominable in the sight of God, and so strictly forbidden by his Divine Law, would be calculated, as in the case of the unhappy Saul, to draw down his most severe anger.

#### SAUL AND THE WITCH OF ENDOR.

"And Saul saw the army of the Philistines and was afraid; and he consulted the Lord, and he answered him not. And Saul said to his servants, *Seek me a woman that hath a divining spirit, and I will go to her and inquire by her*. And his servants said to him, *There is a woman that hath a divining spirit at Endor*. Then he disguised himself, and he went and two men with him, and they came to the

woman by night, and he said to her, *Divine to me by thy divining spirit, and bring me up him whom I shall tell thee.*

“And the woman said to him, *Behold thou knowest all that Saul hath done, and how he hath rooted out the magicians and soothsayers from the land, why then dost thou lay a snare for my life?* And Saul swore to her by the Lord, saying, *As the Lord liveth, there shall no evil happen to thee for this thing.* And the woman said to him, *Whom shall I bring up to thee?* And he said, *Bring me up Samuel.* And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice, and said to Saul, *Why hast thou deceived me, for thou art Saul.* And the king said to her, *Fear not; what hast thou seen?* And the woman said to Saul, *I saw gods ascending out of the earth.* And he said to her, *What form is he of?* And she said, *An old man cometh up, and he is covered with a mantle.* And Saul understood that it was Samuel, and he bowed himself with his face to the ground, and adored.

“And Samuel said to Saul, *Why hast thou disturbed my rest?* And Saul said, *I am in great distress, for the Philistines fight against me, and God is departed from me, and would not hear me. Therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest show me what I shall do.* And Samuel said, *Why askest thou me, seeing that the Lord has departed from thee? The Lord hath done to thee what thou sufferest this day. And he will deliver Israel with thee into the hands of the Philistines, and to-morrow thou and thy sons shall be with me.*

“And forthwith Saul fell all along on the ground, for he was frightened with the words of Samuel” (1 Kings xxviii. 5-20).

We come now to speak of consulting fortune-tellers, which, as we have seen, is as strictly forbidden in the Old Testament as the consulting of the spirits of the dead. “Let there not be found among you any one who consulteth pythonic spirits or fortune-tellers, or that seeketh truth from the dead.” But whom do we mean by fortune-tellers? We mean those cunning cheats, who make their living by imposing on weak and silly people, persuading them that they can tell them whatever they wish to know, as if God had revealed his secrets to *them*, or made known to *them* the hidden things of the future. To consult a fortune-teller is a folly of which, I trust, none of you will ever be guilty; but besides being a folly, it is a sin, since it is an attempt to learn what God has wisely concealed, and to learn it by means which he has expressly forbidden.

But some persons will perhaps say that, if they do go to get their fortunes told, it is only for fun and as a harmless joke, and not because they believe in such folly. My



dear children, he would be a bad Christian indeed who should seek for fun in offending God, or call that a harmless joke which God has said that he abhors, and which he has expressly forbidden. Besides, though those who consult fortune-tellers may not believe them, yet they encourage those whom they consult in their wicked trade, and are thus guilty of the sin of scandal, by causing others to offend Almighty God.

There are other ways, besides consulting fortune-tellers, which foolish ignorant people sometimes practise to discover hidden things. For example, you will sometimes hear of persons so silly as to imagine that, by tossing cups, that is to say, watching the dregs of the tea-leaves in a tea-cup, they can read the history of their lives. Others, again, are guilty of a like folly, in pretending that, by cutting a pack of cards, they can tell any one who asks them whatever he wishes to know. All these and other sinful and foolish tricks come under the common name of *superstitious practices*, and are strictly forbidden by this commandment.

The next sin mentioned is the use of *charms*. By a *charm* we mean anything which is done, or used, or worn, to produce an effect, which we have no reason naturally to expect from it. When the charm consists of a word, or number of words spoken or carried about for the same purpose, it is sometimes called a *spell*, and is of course equally sinful in the sight of God. I will explain what I mean by an example. Let us suppose that you have a toothache which causes you great pain. You go to a druggist, who gives you something to cure you. There, you are taking a proper means of curing yourself, and you have reason to hope that you will be better, for it is the natural effect of medicine to cure disease. God has given it to us for this purpose. But let us suppose that instead of going to the druggist, you go to some old witch, who tells you, that, if you take a flat stone with a hole in the middle, and hang it round your neck, it will cure you; then, if you are silly enough to do what she tells you, you make use of a *charm*; for there is no reason to suppose that a flat piece of stone with a hole in the middle can

**C**ure disease. In the same way if you were to imagine that by saying some idle jargon of words, or wearing about you some sentence written on a scrap of paper, you could cure yourself from sickness, or preserve yourself from hurt and harm, you would be guilty of the sin of trusting to *spells*, and would grievously offend God.

You will sometimes hear Protestants say, that Catholics make use of charms by wearing medals, scapulars, Agnus Deis and Gospels, especially as we hope to be preserved from many evils thereby. But you will easily see that there is an immense difference between the use of charms and that of pious objects, blessed by the prayers of the Church for a particular end. Whoever wears a charm thinks that there is some virtue in what he wears, which has power to preserve him or bring him luck; but the Catholic who uses a blessed medal or Agnus Dei, looks only to God for the effect that he hopes for, trusting that the prayers of the Church and his own good desires will be mercifully heard by God in his behalf, whenever he makes a devout use of that sacred object. The same may be said of the use of blessed palms, tapers, ashes, or Holy Water, and indeed of any object sanctified by the prayers of the Church for a special end.

We now come to speak of *trusting to omens*, by which we mean the folly of attaching importance to trifling occurrences, believing that they are signs of the future, and betoken good or evil. This practice is a relic of paganism, for it was very common among heathen and idolatrous nations. If you read the history of the Greeks or Romans, for example, you will find that they regulated almost all their concerns, both private and public, by the observation of omens. The flight of birds, the pecking of the sacred fowl, the appearance of the entrails of the victims slain for sacrifice, and accidental events of the most trivial nature often decided the question of peace or war, and determined the erection of cities, the passing of laws, and the most important affairs of the state. Such detestable superstition has been in a great measure dispelled by the light of the true religion; but still there linger in some parts even of Christian countries, and in some weak

minds, superstitions of a similar nature. For example, it is a common but foolish saying that a single magpie is a sign of sorrow, two of mirth, three of a wedding, and four of a birth; that to spill salt at table is a token of misfortune; that it is unlucky to sit down to table in a company of thirteen, &c. But you, my dear children, who are better taught, know very well that God does not make the future depend on such foolish trifles.

The believing in dreams, which comes next in the catechism, is quite as foolish and sinful as the observing of omens. This practice also was very common among the pagans, who foolishly imagined that dreams are so many signs or forebodings of the future. Such a belief is a detestable superstition, strictly condemned by God, and forbidden by the first commandment. For dreams come from merely natural causes, being produced by the rambling of the brain at a time when the body and most of the powers of the mind are lulled in sleep. Things that we have seen or heard, or feared or hoped for, then pass through the mind in a disorderly and unconnected manner, especially if the body be out of health, or the mind disturbed by any violent emotion. Such idle wanderings of the brain cannot, it is plain, have any power to unfold to us the future, the knowledge of which God has reserved to himself alone.

It is true, however, that there *are* dreams which come from God, such as those we read of in the Holy Scriptures and in the lives of some of the Saints. For God, who can make use of any means that he pleases to accomplish his adorable ends, has sometimes made use of dreams to make known to man the events of the future. Such were the dreams which he sent to the patriarch Joseph in his youth of the twelve stars and twelve sheaves of corn, whereby he showed him his future greatness. Such, also, were the dreams of Pharaoh, of the seven ears of corn and the seven fat and lean kine, by which were signified the seven years of plenty and of famine, which were about to be accomplished. Then, again, you will remember the famous dream of Nebuchodonosor, who saw in his sleep a vast statue, the limbs of which were made of different materials,

and betokened the great empires that were to succeed each other after his death, in preparation for the establishment of the Church. These and many other dreams of a similar nature were really sent by God, and were in truth signs of the future. But notice, that they were only sent on extraordinary occasions, for especial ends, and that God usually sent an inspired prophet to interpret them—that is, to explain their meaning. To believe in these dreams was no sin, but to believe in the idle, foolish fancies of our brain—for God does not speak to us by dreams—is a wicked superstition, by which the devil has deceived many to their ruin. (See Eccus. xxxiv. 6, 7.)

The following story from the life of St. Bernard will show you in what horror the Saints of God held the sin of superstition.

#### ST. BERNARD'S HEADACHE.

The great St. Bernard, in his youth, was at one time afflicted with a violent headache, which deprived him of his rest, and which all the remedies that were prescribed were unable to relieve. Thereupon some of the attendants bethought themselves of a woman who was reported to have the power of healing diseases by means of certain charms applied to the sick person. They accordingly introduced her into his chamber, but no sooner had the holy youth perceived her intention, than he leaped from his bed and drove her from the room. Having done so, he again lay down, and fell into a refreshing slumber, on awaking from which he found himself entirely cured.—*Life of St. Bernard.*

Q. What other things are forbidden by the first Commandment?

A. All sins of sacrilege and simony are also forbidden by the first Commandment.

In this answer we have two other sins mentioned, which are both opposed to the virtue of Religion, inasmuch as they are a grievous profanation of the worship of God, or of what belongs to it. First of all, we will speak of the sin of *Sacrilege*.

What, then, is sacrilege? It is the profanation of any place, person, or thing that is consecrated to the service of the Almighty. Whatever is consecrated to God is worthy of a certain degree of religious reverence, for the sake of Him to whom it especially belongs. Therefore when, so

far from respecting, we outrage or profane it, we are guilty of a grievous transgression of the duty of religious worship, and of a mortal sin against the first commandment. For example, if a person were to turn a consecrated church into a shop, *that* would be a sacrilege, because a church is *a place* set apart for ever by the solemn act of consecration to the Divine worship. In the same way, if any one were to kill or injure a priest or a nun, he would be guilty of sacrilege, because priests and religious are *persons* especially dedicated to God. Again, if any one were to turn a chalice into a common drinking-cup, it would be sacrilege, because a chalice is *a thing* consecrated by the Bishop for the purpose of holding the Precious Blood of our B. Lord. But the worst of all sacrileges is to receive the Holy Sacraments unworthily, especially the Sacrament of the B. Eucharist, for there is nothing, my dear children, more sacred in religion than the Sacraments, and he who receives Holy Communion in mortal sin profanes and outrages, as far as he is able, not that which is merely dedicated to God, but God himself in the person of his Divine Son.

The other sin here mentioned, that of Simony, consists in selling or buying that which is sacred and set apart for the service of God, as, for example, any spiritual office or grace; hence it may be considered as a kind of sacrilege. This is the sin which Simon Magus committed when he wanted to buy from the Apostles the gift of working miracles, and it is from him that this crime receives its name.

There are many terrible instances recorded in the Holy Scriptures of the judgments of God on those who have been guilty of the sin of sacrilege.

#### PUNISHMENT OF HELIODORUS.

We read in the Book of Machabees that Seleucus, king of Syria, hearing that a large sum of money was deposited in the temple of Jerusalem, despatched Heliodorus, one of his officers, with a sufficient guard to seize upon and convey it to the royal treasury. Having arrived at the holy city, Heliodorus acquainted Onias, the high priest, with the object of his mission, and demanded the surrender of the treasure. Onias firmly refused to comply with his

demand, declaring that the money in question had been dedicated to God for charitable and pious purposes, or had been deposited for greater security in the holy places. To this Heliodorus replied, that what he refused to surrender at the king's order, would be taken from the temple by force.

Meanwhile the whole of the people, with Onias at their head, earnestly implored Almighty God to avert so great a sacrilege. At length, upon the day appointed, Heliodorus, accompanied by his guard, entered the temple, and ordered his men to lay hands upon the sacred treasure. At the same moment, God sent forth his angels to protect his sanctuary, and punish the sacrilegious attempt. All who ventured to obey the orders of Heliodorus were struck by the hand of God, and lay fainting and trembling on the ground, while their leader met with a still more severe chastisement. "For," says the sacred writer, "there appeared to them a horse with a terrible rider, and he ran fiercely and struck Heliodorus with his fore feet; and he that sat upon him seemed to have armour of gold. Moreover, there appeared two other young men, bright and glorious, and in comely apparel, who stood by him on either side, and scourged him without ceasing with many stripes. And Heliodorus suddenly fell to the ground, and they took him up, and, having put him into a litter, carried him out. And he indeed lay speechless and without all hope of recovery. Then some of the friends of Heliodorus forthwith begged of Onias that he would call on the Most High to grant him his life. So the High Priest offered a sacrifice of health for the recovery of the man. And when he was praying, the same young men, in the same clothing, stood by Heliodorus, and said to him, *Give thanks to Onias, the High Priest, because for his sake the Lord hath granted thee life. And thou, having been scourged by God, declare unto all men the great works and the power of God.* And having spoken thus, they appeared no more."

This signal punishment produced a salutary effect on the mind of Heliodorus. After offering a sacrifice to God, in thanksgiving for his merciful preservation, and returning thanks to Onias for his charitable intercession, he returned to the king, publishing everywhere the wonderful events which had occurred. The king was at first anxious to pursue the attempt, and requested Heliodorus to name some one to whom he could entrust the conduct of the enterprise. Whereupon Heliodorus made answer, "If thou hast an enemy or traitor to thy kingdom send him hither, and thou shalt receive him again scourged, if so be he escape. For he that hath his dwelling in heaven is the visitor and protector of that place, and he striketh and destroyeth them that come to do evil to it" (2 Mach. iii.)

#### BANQUET OF KING BALTASSAR.

It is related by the prophet Daniel that during the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, Baltassar, the king of that country, made a great feast to which he invited a thousand of his courtiers. In the

midst of the entertainment, being drunk with wine, he ordered the sacred vessels of gold and silver, which his father Nabuchodonosor had carried off from the temple of Jerusalem, to be brought to table, that he and his guests might drink therefrom, in honour of their false gods. Almighty God did not allow his sacrilegious impiety to remain long unpunished. "In the same hour," says the prophet, "there appeared fingers as it were of the hand of a man, writing upon the surface of the wall of the king's palace; and the king beheld the joints of the hand that wrote." Struck with terror and dismay, Baltassar called for his wise men to interpret the mysterious writing, promising, at the same time, the most magnificent rewards to any one who should succeed in doing so. No one, however, was found among them able to read the writing, much less to explain its meaning.

By the queen's advice, Daniel was now summoned into the royal presence, to whom the king repeated the promises which he had previously made. The holy prophet, inspired by God, while he rejected the splendid offers of the king, declared himself, nevertheless, willing both to read and interpret the writing. After reminding Baltassar of the numberless blessings which he had received from the hand of God, he reproached him for his sacrilegious profanation of the sacred vessels, and declared to him the awful judgments which were about to fall upon his head.

"This," said he, "is the writing that is written—*Mane, Thecel, Phares*. And this is the interpretation of the word. *Mane*: God hath numbered thy kingdom and hath finished it. *Thecel*: thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting. *Phares*: thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

That same night the mysterious sentence was fulfilled. The armies of Darius entered Babylon, overthrew the mighty empire founded by Nabuchodonosor, and established on its ruins the kingdom of the Medes and Persians. The impious Baltassar perished by the sword. (Daniel v.)

#### SACRILEGE AVENGED.

In the year 1834, upon the eve of the Assumption of our Lady, the Puritan population of Charlestown in the United States, being excited by fanatics, rose up against the Catholics, and, with cries of fury, rushed towards the Ursuline convent. It was night-time, and the inmates were reposing in peaceful slumber, when they were aroused by the shouts of the mob and the smashing of the outer doors. Before the pupils had time to dress, the kindling flames flashed over their peaceful dwelling, and it was with difficulty they made their escape, while their invaders were engaged in plundering the church and convent.

In the midst of the tumult, one of the ringleaders ascended the altar, seized the Ciborium, and, horrible to relate, emptied the precious particles into his pocket. He then repaired to an inn at Charlestown, where, surrounded by a throng of eager listeners, he

related his sacrilegious exploit. In the midst of his recital he suddenly recognised among his audience an Irish Catholic, who was listening with intense horror. On perceiving him he drew from his pocket several hosts, and, holding them forth, said in a sneering tone, "Here, behold your God! Why need you go any more to seek him in the church?" The Catholic stood dumb with horror. At the same moment the blasphemer turned pale, and feeling himself seized with a sudden colic, left the apartment. A quarter of an hour, half an hour elapsed, yet he returned not. A vague fear fell upon the bystanders. They followed him to the closet to which he had retired, and there found him—a corpse. He had died the death of Arius.—*Annals of the Prop. of the Faith.*

## TWENTY-FIFTH INSTRUCTION.

*The First Commandment concluded. What it does not forbid. The Making of Images—Praying to the Saints and Angels—Honour paid to Relics, Crucifixes, and Holy Pictures.*

Q. Does the first Commandment forbid the making of images?

A. The first Commandment does not forbid the making of images, but the making of idols; that is, it forbids us to make images to be adored or honoured as gods.

When Almighty God says in the first commandment, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, nor in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth," he *does not forbid altogether the making of images*, but only of such images as are intended to be set up as *idols*, that is, which are made *to be adored or honoured as gods*. For the meaning of the words, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing," is explained by the words which follow—"Thou shalt not adore them or serve them." If it were not so, it would be wrong for us to make a statue to be set up in a public square, or the figure of a horse or dog to put upon our chimney-piece, or even a doll for a child to play with. But we know that there is no harm in any of these things.

We are forbidden, therefore, to make images to *adore* or *serve* them, but not forbidden to make them for any other purpose; for example, for use or ornament, or



to inspire religious reverence and devotion. Indeed, God himself in the old law commanded images to be made and used for religious purposes; for example, the two golden Cherubim placed on each side of the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies, whose extended wings formed, as it were, the Mercy Seat of God, from which he made known his Will to the Jewish people (Exod. xxv. 18, &c.: xxxvii. 7; Numb. xxi. 8, 9). What God himself ordered the Jews to do, the Catholic Church does likewise, placing in her temples the images of the Angels and Saints, and, above all, that of Christ crucified and his B. Mother. These sacred representations serve to fill the mind with holy thoughts, to instruct and arouse our faith, to excite our hope, to move us to love and sorrow, and finally to animate us with a holy zeal to imitate the virtues of those whose images we contemplate. For in the same way as men erect in the squares and public places of our cities the statues of kings, and warriors, and statesmen, though but sinners like themselves, as well to honour their memory as also to excite the zeal of others to imitate those great deeds which they have performed for the good of their country, so also does the Church of God place in her temples the images of our Divine Redeemer, his Virgin Mother, and his Saints and Angels, not only in order to show a loving reverence to those whom they represent, but also to lead us to walk in their footsteps by imitation of their virtues.

I told you just now that it is strictly forbidden by this commandment to make any graven image for the purpose of idolatrous worship. Listen, and I will relate to you the history of five noble martyrs, who chose rather to sacrifice their lives than be guilty of this heinous sin.

#### DIOCLESIAN AND THE SCULPTORS.

In the reign of Dioclesian there lived at Rome five clever sculptors, whose works of art had obtained for them a high place in the Emperor's favour. Their names were Claudius, Nicostratus, Symphorianus, Casterius, and Simplicius, the last of whom had been converted to the Christian religion by the piety and edifying example of his companions. Never did these holy men commence their labour without devoutly invoking the Holy Name of Jesus, and so great a blessing

attended this pious practice, that each succeeding work served to raise them higher in the Emperor's favour.

About this time Dioclesian was engaged in the erection of a costly edifice, and as he was anxious that the decoration should be as perfect as possible, he sent for the five sculptors to execute the difficult piece of carving which was to ornament the front of the building. The design exhibited the figures of various animals which were to be carved in marble; the centre of the piece was to be occupied by the images of certain pagan divinities. After a short time the Emperor came to watch the progress of the work. He found the carving complete, with the exception of the vacant space which was to be occupied with the images of the pretended deities. Dioclesian praised the sculptors for the skill with which they had executed a portion of the work, but blamed them for their delay in completing the remainder. "Sire," replied they, "we are Christians, and we are not permitted by our religion to execute any work which may contribute to the superstitious worship of idols." The Emperor, enraged, ordered them to be delivered up to the judge, to whom he gave secret orders to use every effort to induce them to renounce the faith, that he might not lose, by their martyrdom, the services of such skilful workmen. The judge displayed before their eyes the most frightful instruments of torture, and strove by alternate threats and promises to induce them to submit to the Emperor's will. His efforts proving unavailing, he caused them to be inhumanly scourged. As they still remained constant, Dioclesian condemned them to be shut up alive in a vast leaden coffin, and thrown into the river Tiber. The sentence was executed, and they thus sealed their noble profession of faith by a glorious martyrdom.

—*Lives of the Saints.*

Q. Is it forbidden to give honour and worship to the Angels and Saints?

A. It is forbidden to give to the Angels and Saints divine honour or worship, for this belongs to God alone.

Q. Should we pay some kind of honour or worship to the Angels and Saints?

A. We should pay to the Angels and Saints an inferior honour or worship, for this is due to them as the servants and special friends of God.

From these two answers you see that, while it is forbidden to give the Angels and Saints *Divine honour and worship*, which belongs only to God, it is noways forbidden to pay them an *inferior* or lesser *honour and worship*; indeed, that it is our duty to render this to them, as being the chosen *servants and special friends of God*. For an honour paid for the sake of God, passes to God himself; nor could we honour God rightly, if we did not also

honour those whom God has himself honoured and placed about his heavenly throne. You will easily understand this from what happens here below. We honour the Queen as the sovereign ruler of the State, but we also, for her sake, honour her ministers, her generals, her judges. Were we wanting in respect to them, we should be dishonouring the Queen herself. And why? Because by their very office and position they are entitled to be treated with respect, as possessing her confidence and bearing the marks of her authority. Yet notice, that the honour we pay to them falls far short of that which we render to the Queen in person. We salute them with respect if we meet them, but we do not kiss their hand on bended knee, as those do who are presented to the Queen. We call them by the titles which they hold, but we never say to them "Your gracious Majesty." So is it also in the court of heaven. To God alone we pay *Divine* worship, but to the Saints and Angels we show a *lesser* reverence for the sake of God, whose friends and servants they are. Thus we *adore* God, but we do not adore them; we *ask God to pardon our sins*, but we do not ask pardon from the Saints and Angels; we *beg blessings and grace from God*, but we only ask the Saints and Angels to use their power and favour with God to obtain for us from him what we stand in need of. Hence you see there is a wide, and indeed an infinite distance between the honour we pay to God and that which we render to his Saints and Angels—as great a distance as there is between the Creator and the creature.

You will often hear it said by those who differ from us in religion that the honour paid by Catholics to the Saints and Angels is an injury done to God, and takes away from the honour due to him. You see clearly that this cannot be the case, since the honour which we pay to them is of a totally different nature from that which we give to God, and is given only for His sake. On the contrary, it is plain that we honour God the more, the more we reverence those who are his friends and favourites. For it is God who has made them what they are; and when we extol their glory, their power, their holiness,

their sublime virtues, we extol his gifts and graces. Take, for example, the Virgin Mother of his Divine Son, the greatest, the noblest of God's creatures, excepting only the Sacred Human nature of our B. Lord. Who is it that has made her what she is—so pure from every stain of sin, so humble, chaste and gentle, so high in dignity and glory, the creature, yet the Mother of God, and the Queen of Angels and of men? It is to God, and God alone, that Mary owes all, as she herself tells us in her beautiful canticle of thanksgiving, the Magnificat, "He that is mighty hath done great things in me, and Holy is his Name." Therefore, when we praise and show reverence to Mary, when we recommend ourselves to her protection and ask her intercession, we glorify and acknowledge the Infinite Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness of God, as manifested in her. In the same way is it with the other Saints and the Angels of God; they are his friends, his favourites, or his ministers to execute his Divine decrees; but all their honour, their holiness, their power with him come from God himself, and are the gift of his Goodness. In praising them, therefore, we praise him; in begging their prayers, we show our belief that he loves them, and will not refuse to grant them what they ask.

Cherish, therefore, my dear children, always in your hearts a tender devotion to the Angels and Saints of God. Especially love and honour the B. Mother of God, who is our own Mother also, since our dear Lord gave us to her to be her children before he expired on the cross, and bade us look upon her henceforth as our mother. Oh, how many precious graces shall we not obtain, if we practise, during life, a filial devotion to the B. Virgin! She will be our comfort in affliction, our strength in temptation, our sure refuge in every danger. Be faithful, therefore, in performing some little devotion daily in her honour. Love to pray before her image, to sing her praises, to adorn her altar, but, above all, strive to practise those virtues of which she sets you so beautiful an example, especially these three—humility, obedience, and holy purity. Believe me, there is no more powerful means of advancing in virtue, and no surer sign of perse-

verance, than the practice of a true devotion to the B. Virgin.

After our B. Lady, do not fail to love and honour St. Joseph, for his power is very great with Mary, his Virgin Spouse, and with the Divine Child, of whom he was the guardian and protector on earth. St. Joseph is especially the patron of the young and of the dying. He will guide your steps in the path of virtue, guard your innocence from danger, and obtain for you the greatest of all graces, namely, a happy death. I would recommend you to say some little prayer daily in his honour.

You should also have a special devotion to your Patron Saint, whose name you received in Baptism or Confirmation, or whom you have particularly chosen as your model and protector. You should read his life, try to imitate his virtues, and frequently recommend yourself to his prayers. He on his part will intercede for you before the throne of God, and guard and help you in all the trials of life.

There is one kind friend and protector, of whom I have not yet spoken, but whom you should never forget, for he is ever by your side, watching over you with a tender and constant love, guiding your steps aright, assisting you in every necessity, protecting you in every danger. I mean, of course, your Guardian Angel. For you know that is a pious and universal belief in the Catholic Church, that when God gives each of us our being, he at the same time chooses out from among those glorious spirits who ever minister about his throne, one to be our special guardian and protector throughout life. Hence, holy David says beautifully in one of the Psalms, "He hath given his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up lest thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Ps. xc. 11, 12). And again, our Blessed Lord, in warning his disciples against the grievous sin of scandal, reminds them, that the Guardian Angels of those whom they lead to sin will bear witness against them before the throne of God: "I say to you that their Angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 10). Oh, my dear children,

How many graces do we not owe to the watchful care and tender love of these blessed spirits ! It is they who shield us from danger, strengthen us in trial and temptation, comfort us in affliction, and breathe into our souls pure and holy thoughts. How true, indeed, are those beautiful words of the hymn—

“But I have felt thee in my thoughts  
Fighting with sin for me ;  
And when my heart loves God, I know  
The sweetness is from thee.

“Yes, when I pray, thou prayest too,  
Thy prayer is all for me ;  
But when I sleep thou sleepest not  
But watchest patiently.”

Preserve, then, ever in your hearts a tender devotion to your good Angel. Always remember his presence, and never grieve this pure and holy spirit by defiling your soul, which he loves so dearly, with the guilt of wilful sin. Often invoke him in your temptations, for he is especially appointed by God to help you in such moments of need. You could say to him, for example, this little prayer, “My dear Angel Guardian defend me ;” or this longer one, to which an indulgence is attached, “Oh, my good Angel, whom God has appointed to be my Guardian, enlighten and protect me, direct and govern me.”

There is a beautiful history related in the Holy Scripture, which shows with what loving kindness and tender care our Guardian Angels watch over those committed to their charge, and guide their steps through life. I mean the history of—

#### ST. RAPHAEL AND THE YOUNG TOBIAS.

When the elder Tobias was now old and blind, and thought that the day of his death was not far distant, he called his son, and, after giving him his last advice, bade him seek out some trusty guide to conduct him to the city of Rages, there to receive a sum of money due to him by one Gabelus. The young Tobias, going out to fulfil his father's commands, was met by a youth of comely aspect who was girded ready for a journey. In answer to his inquiries, the stranger told him that he knew the way to Rages, and was acquainted with Gabelus ; he added, moreover, that he was ready to guide him on his road. Full of joy, Tobias brought in the

young stranger to his father, who asked him his name, little thinking that it was the great Archangel St. Raphael, whom God, to reward his piety, had sent to take charge of his beloved son. The youth replied that his name was Azarias, for this was the name that he had assumed, and he assured the old man that he would undertake to conduct his son in safety to Rages, and bring him back again to his home.

The two travellers accordingly set out, and rested the first evening by the banks of the river Tigris. Here Tobias went into the water in order to bathe his feet, when suddenly a monstrous fish came rushing forwards to devour him. In great terror he called out to his companion, who told him not to be afraid, but to take the fish by the gill and draw him to the shore. He did so, and, having brought the fish to land, set aside, by the direction of his guide, a portion of it as useful for medicine; the rest they cooked and carried with them as provision for the journey.

Thus they travelled on till they arrived at the house of Raguel, a friend of the elder Tobias. Now, it happened that Raguel had a daughter named Sara, who had been espoused to seven different husbands, all of whom had been slain by Satan on the first night of their nuptials. The Angel bade Tobias ask her in marriage, assuring him that such was the Will of God. Tobias did so, and obtained her father's consent. The marriage was celebrated with great rejoicing, and the holy couple sanctified it and drew down on themselves the protection of heaven by spending the first three nights of their union in prayer. Meanwhile, Azarias proceeded to Rages, and received the money owing by Gabelus.

Soon after, the young Tobias, with his virtuous spouse and faithful guide, set out on his return home. As they drew near their journey's end, the dog, which had accompanied them throughout, went running forwards with signs of joy, as if to announce their return. Tobias rose hastily, and leaning on a servant's arm, ran, with stumbling feet, to meet and embrace his son. After the first joyful greetings were over, the young Tobias, by the direction of Azarias, took of the fish's gall, and applied it to the eyes of his father, who immediately recovered his sight. With hearts overflowing with gratitude, both father and son raised their voices in praise to God, and then, turning to the young guide, begged him to accept of half of their substance as some return for his services. Upon which Azarias declared who he really was, and how he had been sent by God to guide the son, and to console and heal the father.

"*Bless ye the God of heaven,*" said he; "*give glory to him in the sight of all that live, because he hath shewn his mercy to you. For I am the Angel Raphael, one of the seven who stand before the Lord. Peace be to you, fear not. For when I was with you I was there by the will of God. It is time that I return to him that sent me, but bless ye God and publish all his wonderful works.*"

"And when he had said these things he was taken from their sight, and they could see him no more. Then they, lying prostrate

for three hours on their face, blessed God, and rising up they told all his wonderful works" (Tobias xii. 21, 22).

Tobias lived to an extreme old age, and died, happily, in the arms of his children and grandchildren.—*Tobias*.

#### OTHER EXAMPLES RELATING TO THE HOLY ANGELS.

The holy patriarch Jacob, being on his deathbed, called his twelve sons around him to give them his last blessing. His son Joseph brought also his two children, Ephraim and Manasses, to their grandfather's bedside, and Jacob, stretching out his hands to bless them, prayed thus, "The Angel that delivereth me from all evils bless these boys" (Gen. xlviii).

When Almighty God spoke to Moses upon Mount Sinai, he told him that he had appointed one of his holy Angels to guide and protect the people of Israel, and conduct them safely into the promised land. "Behold," said he, "I will send my Angel who shall go before thee, and keep thee in thy journey, and bring thee into the place that I have prepared. Take notice of him and hear his voice, and do not think him one to be contemned; for he will not forgive when thou hast sinned, and my name is in him. But if thou wilt hear his voice, and do all that I speak, I will be an enemy to thy enemies, and will afflict them that afflict thee. And my Angel shall go before thee, and shall bring thee into the promised land" (Ex. xxiii. 20-23).

While the prophet Daniel was mourning over the continued captivity of the Jewish people, and was praying fervently to God for their speedy deliverance, there appeared to him an Angel, probably the Archangel St. Gabriel, who told him that his prayer was heard, and that God had sent him to announce its speedy accomplishment. The same heavenly messenger informed him that the Prince, or Guardian Angel of the Persians, had resisted him in this matter for one and twenty days, when St. Michael, the Guardian Angel of the Church of God, came to his help, and that their prayers prevailed with God. No doubt, the blessed Angel of the Persians was unwilling that the nation intrusted to his charge should be deprived of the presence and example of a people who followed the true religion, not worshipping false gods like the Persians, but the One True God of heaven. The Angel added, that the Guardian Angel of the Greeks had appeared also, when he came forth to the prophet, so that he would return to continue the combat. He feared, probably, that the Angel of the Greeks, whose empire was soon to be established on the ruins of that of Persia, would be equally anxious that the Jews should remain in that country for the spiritual good of the people committed to his charge, and would join with the Angel of the Persians in imploring this grace from God (Dan. x).

During the cruel persecutions raised by King Herod against the early Christians at Jerusalem, St. Peter was thrown into prison, where he was bound with chains and guarded by a band of soldiers.



In the middle of the night an Angel appeared to him, loosed his chains, and led him forth into the street, where he disappeared from his sight. St. Peter, being now at liberty, directed his steps to the house of Mary, the mother of St. Mark, where the faithful were assembled, praying for his speedy deliverance. Having knocked at the door, a servant maid, named Rhode, came cautiously to listen: recognising, however, the voice of St. Peter, she ran in haste to tell the disciples that it was St. Peter himself who was without. They, knowing that the Apostle had been cast into prison and placed under a strong guard, did not at first believe her, but thought that, perhaps, it was his Guardian Angel come to console them in his absence. "Nay," said they to her, "it cannot be St. Peter, surely *it is his Angel*." Upon opening the door, however, they found that it was the Apostle himself, who related to them the manner of his miraculous deliverance (Acts xii).

From these examples you see how the Jews believed, no less than we do, in the protecting care of Guardian Angels, and how this belief is in perfect accordance with the teaching of Holy Scripture.

Q. Should we give honour to relics, crucifixes, and holy pictures?

A. Yes; we should give to relics, crucifixes, and holy pictures, an inferior and relative honour, as they relate to Christ and his Saints, and are memorials of them.

Q. May we pray to relics or images?

A. No; we may not pray to relics or images, for they can neither see, nor hear, nor help us.

We come now to speak of the honour paid by Catholics to *relics, crucifixes, and holy pictures*. These two answers of the catechism teach us that it is our duty to *honour* them, but that it is not permitted to *pray to* them. We honour them because *they are memorials*, that is, objects which remind us of *Christ and his Saints*; but we do not pray to them, because they are without life or sense, and *can neither see, nor hear, nor help us*. Moreover, the honour which we pay to them is of an *inferior* or lesser kind, and is only *relative*; that is, given to them not for their own sake, but for the sake of our B. Lord and his Saints to whom they in some manner *relate*.

From this simple explanation, you see how foolish is the charge of idolatry sometimes brought against Catholics by ignorant people, on account of the respect which we show to relics, crucifixes, and holy pictures. Idolatry is,

as you know, the giving Divine worship to an image or false God. But can any one be so foolish as to suppose that we worship as gods the *relics*, that is, the sacred remains of departed Saints; or that we adore pious pictures or the *images* of Christ crucified? The simplest Catholic child knows that the respect which we pay to these objects is only a means that we take of showing our reverence and affection to those whom they represent, or to whom they have in some manner belonged.

But it will be said that we place these objects in our churches, that we adorn them with lights and flowers, that we wear them about our necks, that we kneel and pray before them. Assuredly we do. But does not a child cherish with the same fond reverence the memorials of a departed parent without ever being blamed, much less charged with idolatry for so doing? Let us suppose you have lost a beloved mother in your early childhood. You remember well her watchful and patient care, her loving words, her gentle smile. She was taken from you by the hand of God, no more to meet or embrace you till that day so full of happiness for the good, the day of the final resurrection. But, perhaps, you have the good fortune to possess a lock of her hair, the letters she has written to you, or some other object which once belonged to her. Can any one blame you if you prize these relics, as they really are, of a dear departed mother, above all else that you possess, if you carry them about with you, if you kiss them with filial tenderness? Or let us suppose that you have a picture or likeness which recalls to you the features of that beloved parent. Does any one charge you with the black crime of idolatry if you set it in an honoured place in your little room, if you adorn it with flowers, if you water it with your tears, or if, in moments of temptation, you kneel and pray before it, recalling to your mind the gentle warnings and prudent counsels given you in years gone by by that dear departed one? Nay, so far from blaming you, would not any one that saw you say, "There is a good child, who truly loved his mother." And shall it not be lawful, then, to show the same affectionate reverence to the memorials of our loving Saviour,

of our Heavenly Mother, or of the B. Saints and Angels, that we do to those of our departed earthly parents? Surely the more holy and exalted that the person is whom the image or relic recalls to our mind, the greater is the reverence with which it should be treated. You will understand from this, I am sure, why it is that the Catholic Church shows such respect to relics, crucifixes, and holy pictures.

#### THE ABBOT STEPHEN AND THE EMPEROR'S IMAGE.

Above seven hundred years after Christ, a violent heresy arose in the East, which was directed against the veneration that had always been paid in the Catholic Church to crucifixes and sacred images. The fanatics who embraced this heresy overran the country, everywhere tearing down and defacing the pictures and statues of Christ and his Saints, from whence they received the name of Iconoclasts or "Breakers of images." The Emperor Constantine Copronymus, who was a violent partisan of these heretics, treated with the greatest cruelty all who remained steadfast to the Catholic faith.

Among others who were summoned before him was the holy Abbot Stephen, whom he ordered to trample upon the crucifix, if he wished to save his life. Stephen declared that he would rather die than be guilty of so great an irreverence towards his blessed Redeemer. "Stupid and ignorant man," rejoined the Emperor, "do you suppose that, by trampling upon his image, you trample upon Jesus Christ?" Upon this the Saint, drawing from beneath his robe a piece of money, asked the Emperor whose image it was that was engraved upon it. "Whose can it be," replied he, "but my own?" The holy man then turning to the bystanders said, "What treatment, think you, would he deserve who should trample under foot the Emperor's image?" "A most severe punishment," replied all with one voice. "What!" said the Saint, heaving a deep sigh, "shall it be esteemed a grievous crime to trample under foot the image of a mortal king, and none to outrage that of the King of Heaven!" Constantine felt the force of this reasoning, but did not yield to it. Falling into a violent passion, he ordered the heroic monk to be beheaded.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

There are many among you, I daresay, who wear about your necks a blessed crucifix, medal, scapular, Agnus Dei, or Gospel. The relics of the Saints are also worn in the same manner. As it is well that you should understand the meaning of what you wear, I will give you a short explanation of these sacred objects.

The *crucifix* is the image of our B. Lord nailed to the

cross, so that you see there is a difference between a crucifix and a cross. A cross is simply a piece of wood, metal, &c., with a shorter piece placed across it; but a crucifix is a cross with the figure of Jesus Christ upon it. By wearing the crucifix devoutly, we are reminded of the infinite love of our Saviour in dying for us on the cross, we are taught to place all our hopes in the merits of his Passion and Death, and are encouraged to follow him generously, bearing our cross after him by patiently submitting to the trials and afflictions which he sends us.

The *medals*, which we wear as objects of devotion, are pieces of metal stamped with some sacred image, such as the figure of our B. Lady, of our Guardian Angel, or of our Patron Saint. There are also medals of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, of the Precious Blood, of First Communion, Confirmation, &c. By wearing respectfully these sacred medals, we show our devotion to that Saint or Mystery which they represent, and obtain, no doubt, many graces through the pious sentiments which they inspire, and the prayers which are offered up over them in the name of the Church when they are blessed. There are also many indulgences, which have been granted by different Popes to those who wear or make devout use of crucifixes and sacred medals; but in order to gain them, it is necessary that these pious objects should have been blessed by some priest who has received the necessary power from the Pope.

The *scapular* is a sacred badge, consisting of two small pieces of cloth joined together by two strings and worn about the neck. The first mention of the scapular is found in the life of St. Simon Stock, General of the Order of Mount Carmel. This holy monk earnestly besought our Lady to bestow on the religious of his Order some pledge of her special care and protection. The B. Virgin granted his request, and, appearing to him, presented him with a scapular which she held in her hand, at the same time promising that she would watch over and guard in a special manner all who should wear it in her honour. Since that time many religious orders have worn it over their habits, and numbers of the faithful also wear it

under their ordinary clothing. The scapular most commonly used is the Brown Scapular of our Lady of Mount Carmel, but there are many others. There is the Blue Scapular of our Lady's Immaculate Conception, and the Black Scapular in honour of her Seven Dolours. There is also the Red Scapular in honour of the Passion of our Blessed Lord, and the White Scapular in honour of the Most Holy Trinity. In order to gain the indulgences attached to the wearing of the scapular, it is necessary that we should be invested with it by a priest who has received power for the purpose. We must also wear it constantly, recite the prescribed prayers, and fulfil the other conditions laid down. But let us remember that it will avail us little to wear the badge or livery of our B. Lady or our Divine Lord, if we do not honour their sacred habits by a good and holy life.

The *Agnus Dei* is made from the wax of the Paschal Candle mixed with the Sacred Chrism, and is worn in honour of our B. Redeemer. It receives its name of "Agnus Dei," or "Lamb of God," from the figure of a lamb stamped upon it in memory of our dear Lord, who shed his blood like a meek and gentle lamb for our salvation. Sometimes it is worn about the neck, in which case it is covered with silk, out of respect; at other times it is enclosed in a frame or silver case to be hung in our rooms or oratories. No one but the Pope can bless an Agnus Dei, and he performs this ceremony but once in seven years, upon Easter Thursday. In this solemn blessing he prays that those who use the Agnus Dei devoutly may be preserved from pestilence, earthquakes, shipwrecks, and sudden death; also that they may receive many spiritual and temporal blessings. Although those who wear the Agnus Dei are not strictly obliged to recite any prayer, yet it is recommended to say daily some little prayer in honour of it. A very suitable one is the prayer repeated three times by the priest in the Mass, "Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us."

*Gospels* are of very ancient use in the Catholic Church. They consist usually of a written or printed copy of the

beginning of St. John's Gospel, the same part that is read by the priest at the end of Mass ; and they are used as a protection against various diseases and other calamities. By wearing them devoutly, we express our firm belief in the truths revealed to us by God in the Holy Gospel, the unbounded confidence which we place in his Goodness, and our ardent love of Him, the true Word of God, who " was made flesh and dwelt amongst us."

By *relics*, we mean the remains of the Saints ; for example, portions of their bones, of their hair, of their clothes, or of whatever has belonged to them during life, or touched their bodies after death. These relics are usually enclosed in silver cases, sealed with the Pope's seal, and are accompanied with a written paper certifying that they are true or genuine. The honour paid to relics is as old as the Church herself. No sooner had the Apostles and early Martyrs laid down their lives in the midst of cruel torments for the love of their Divine Master, than the Christians eagerly sought out the remains of their sacred bodies, and preserved them with the utmost reverence. During the times of persecution they hid these precious relics in the catacombs, or secret passages beneath the surface of the earth, to which they had to fly for safety ; but when peace was restored to the Church, they erected over them magnificent altars and costly churches, to which the faithful flocked to pray before the tombs of the martyrs, and implore their intercession in presence of their sacred remains. The same veneration has in all ages been paid by the Church to the relics of the Saints, and this not only through respect for the Saints themselves, but still more in reverence to God. For as the bodies of the Saints were during their lives upon earth the chosen temples of the Holy Ghost, and will hereafter be glorified for all eternity in heaven, so does the Church feel that any honour paid to their remains redounds to the glory of God, who has blessed and sanctified them for his own Divine service.

You will now understand, my dear children, that these pious objects, the meaning of which I have explained to you, are so many *helps* given us by God to arouse our

faith and excite our devotion. In making use of them, we hope to obtain many graces, and to be preserved from many dangers through the prayers of the Saints in whose honour we wear them, or through the blessing which the Church has pronounced over them. Were we to expect help from the objects themselves, or to imagine that the mere wearing of them would be sufficient to save us, we should be guilty of the sin of superstition. But you all well know, that it is to God alone, through the merits of his Divine Son, that we look for every grace; and that we cannot hope for salvation if we do not believe what he has taught, and practise what he has commanded. We hope, indeed, to obtain the Divine assistance more speedily and surely through the prayers of the Saints and the blessing of the Church, but we are very far from believing that crucifixes, or medals, or scapulars, or Agnus Deis, or even the relics of the Saints, have, of themselves, any power to help or save us.

#### THE USE OF RELICS WARRANTED BY HOLY SCRIPTURE.

The prophet Eliseus, who inherited, along with the garment, the miraculous powers of his great master Elias, was no less remarkable for his holy life than for his wonderful miracles. At his death he was buried, according to the custom of the Jews, in a tomb or small cavern hollowed out of the rock, the door of which was closed, no doubt, with a large flag or stone, as we read in the history of our Lord's burial. Shortly afterwards, the Moabites, a neighbouring nation who were often at war with the Jews, made an incursion into the land of Israel. It happened that a party of Israelites were at this very time carrying the body of a man to the place of burial, the road to which lay past the tomb of Eliseus. Seeing the Moabite rovers approaching, and fearing for their lives, they hastily uncovered the sepulchre of the prophet, and cast in the body. No sooner had the corpse touched the bones of Eliseus, than the soul returned to it, and the man stood upon his feet alive and well (4 Kings xiii.).

"And behold a woman," says the Evangelist, "who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Jesus and touched the hem of his garment. For she said within herself, *If I shall touch only his garment I shall be healed.* But Jesus, turning and seeing her, said, *Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole.* And the woman was made whole from that hour" (Matt. ix. 20-22).

"And God," says St. Luke, "wrought by the hand of Paul more

than common miracles, so that even there were brought from his body to the sick handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the wicked spirits went out of them" (Acts xix. 11, 12).

The Church of God, which is ever watchful in guarding her children from all danger of superstition, requires that no public honour should be paid to relics which have not been properly examined and declared to be true and genuine. You will understand how careful she is on this point from the following little history.

#### ST. MARTIN AND THE ROBBER GHOST.

In the time of St. Martin, Bishop of Tours, in France, there were, at a little distance from that city, an altar and chapel built over the body of a pretended martyr whose relics were held by the people in great veneration. St. Martin, suspecting that their devotion was misplaced, carefully examined into the origin of this sanctuary, and questioned the oldest of his clergy on the subject. Not receiving any satisfactory explanation, he one day repaired to the spot, attended by his clergy, and, standing over the tomb, earnestly besought Almighty God to show him who it was that was there buried. Then, turning to the left, he saw near him a pale ghost of fierce aspect, whom he commanded to speak. The ghost told him his name, and it then appeared that the body was that of a robber who had been executed for his crimes, but whom the people revered as a martyr. None saw him but St. Martin, the rest only heard his voice. St. Martin, accordingly, ordered the altar to be removed, and thus freed the people from the superstition.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

#### WOOD OF THE TRUE CROSS.

St. Gregory, another Bishop of Tours, who lived in the sixth century, and on account of his many miracles is surnamed Thaumaturgus, or the Wonder-worker, says, in his writings, that he once received a present of an old silk veil, which the donor assured him had been wrapped round the wood of the true cross. "In my simplicity," says St. Gregory, "I had a difficulty in believing it; nor could I imagine how he could have merited so great a favour, knowing, as I did, that on the days when the sacred wood was exposed, it was not only impossible to obtain any relic of it, but that the greatest care and even violence was employed to keep the crowd at a respectful distance. The person related to me, however, that he had received it at Jerusalem, along with other relics, from the Abbot Photinus, an ecclesiastic in high favour with Sophia, the Empress of the East.

"On receiving the veil," continues the Saint, "I washed it in



water, and gave certain persons, who were suffering from fever, the water to drink. In a moment, by the effect of the Divine power, they were cured. I gave a portion of the veil to a certain abbot, who, coming to see me two years after, assured me that he had cured with it three possessed persons, three who were blind, and two paralytics. One day, he informed me, he put the veil into the mouth of a dumb man, but scarce had it touched his teeth and tongue, when his voice and speech were restored."—*Rohrbacher, Vies des Saints.*

Miraculous cures, similar to those related by St. Gregory, frequently accompany, even in these our days, the devout use of relics or other pious objects. For the arm of God is not shortened, nor is his Power diminished; while his Goodness and Mercy are equally ready now, as they were in the days of the Apostles, to reward the faith and loving confidence of those who have recourse to him, if he sees that the favour which they ask will conduce to the salvation of their souls.

Before we go on to speak of the second commandment, there is one other remark which I wish to make, and it is this. In wearing the image of Christ crucified, or of his Saints, in placing them in your little oratories, in adorning them with lights and flowers, you should never forget that what you must principally aim at is, to imprint in your hearts the virtues of those whom they represent. The crucifix, meditated upon, will preach you a continual sermon. In moments of temptation it will keep you from sin by the remembrance of what our dear Lord has suffered for our salvation. In sorrow and sickness it will animate you to patience and resignation, by the example of his patient suffering. It will teach you to be meek and humble of heart, to forgive all who have offended you, as Christ forgave his enemies on the Cross, and to be obedient, in all things, to your parents and superiors, as he was obedient to his Heavenly Father even unto death. In like manner, the pictures of the Saints will animate you to fight against your passions, to despise the world and its empty pleasures, and to walk in their footsteps by the imitation of their virtues, keeping your eyes constantly fixed on heaven, where they are now awaiting you. Oh, my dear children, how happy will you be if

you learn such lessons from these sacred objects! Encouraged by the example of the Saints, and helped by their prayers, you will not fail one day to arrive at the same eternal happiness.

#### ST. BONAVENTURE AND THE CRUCIFIX.

The great St. Bonaventure, who, on account of his many learned and pious writings, is numbered among the Doctors of the Church, was one day visited by St. Thomas of Aquinas, who asked him what books he had chiefly made use of in composing so many excellent and learned works. St. Bonaventure pointed to his crucifix, all tarnished with the many kisses he had imprinted upon it, saying, "This is the book from which I have collected all that I have written; this has taught me all the little that I know."—*Life of St. Bonaventure.*

#### DEATH OF MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTLAND.

The gentle and unfortunate Mary Stuart, having taken refuge in England from her rebellious subjects, was thrown into prison by her cousin, Queen Elizabeth, and kept for many years in close confinement. After the mockery of a trial she was condemned to death, and at length the fatal warrant was signed by Elizabeth. Mary prepared herself for her end with edifying piety, and walked with firmness to the scaffold, bearing the crucifix in her hands. Upon her arrival at the place of execution, she offered a fervent prayer for the pardon of her sins, and for a blessing on the Church, her son James, and her cousin Queen Elizabeth. Then, holding up the crucifix before her eyes, she exclaimed, "As thy arms, O God! were stretched out upon the cross, so receive me into the arms of thy mercy, and forgive me my sins." "Madam," said the Earl of Kent, "you had better leave such Popish trumperies, and bear him in your heart." She replied, "I cannot hold in my hand the representation of his sufferings, but I must, at the same time, bear him in my heart." So saying, she laid her head upon the block, and gave up her soul into the arms of her crucified Lord.—*Lingard's History of England.*

#### KING BOLISLAUS AND HIS FATHER'S IMAGE.

Bolislau IV., King of Poland, caused the image of his father, for whose memory he entertained the greatest veneration, to be engraved upon a golden medal, and always wore it round his neck. Ever after, when about to say or do anything of importance, he took the image into his hand and kissed it, saying respectfully, "Dear father, let me not do anything unworthy of your name."

How much more guarded would Christians be over

their words and actions, were they to wear about their necks the image of Jesus crucified, and look at it when tempted to stain their souls with sin, saying, in the words of Bolislaus, "Dear Saviour, do not allow me to do anything unworthy of the name of Christian."

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## TWENTY-SIXTH INSTRUCTION.

*The Second Commandment—What it commands—Reverence in speaking of God and holy things—Fidelity in keeping our lawful oaths and vows—What it forbids—Swearing, blasphemy, cursing, and profane words.*

Q. What is the second Commandment?

A. The second Commandment is, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

We now come to speak of the second commandment, in which Almighty God strictly enjoins us not to take his Holy and Adorable Name in vain, "for the Lord," he adds, "will not hold him guiltless who shall take the Name of the Lord his God in vain" (Exod. xx. 7). From this we see how heinous in the sight of God is the profanation of his Holy Name, since he has added to this one only among all the commandments a special threat in case we disobey him—"the Lord will not hold him guiltless;" that is to say, he will consider him guilty of a grievous crime.

Let us first see what we are *commanded* to do by this commandment, and afterwards what sins it *forbids* us to commit.

Q. What are we commanded by the second Commandment?

A. By the second Commandment we are commanded to speak with reverence of God and all holy persons and things, and to keep our lawful oaths and vows.

From this answer you see that there are two particular duties enjoined by this commandment.

The first is, *to speak with reverence of God and all holy things*, that is, of all that relates to God.

The second is, *to keep faithfully our lawful oaths*, and

the lawful *vows*, or promises, which we have made to God.

I need not, I think, give you any reasons to show that it is our duty to speak with becoming reverence of Almighty God. If you only consider for a moment who *He* is and who *we* are, you will easily see that we are bound by every motive to speak of God with the most profound respect. *He* is the Sovereign Lord and Master of all, the Great Creator of heaven and earth. *We* are his creatures and the work of his hands. *He* is Infinite in Goodness, Wisdom, Power, Holiness, and every perfection. *We* are poor little worms of the earth, full of sin and corruption. *He* is our continual Preserver, our constant Benefactor, our tender Father, and our loving Saviour. *We* are in everything dependent upon him, and receive every moment fresh marks of his Goodness and Love; moreover, we are his adopted children, redeemed from the power of the devil by his own most Precious Blood. Surely, then, we are strictly bound by every motive, whenever we speak of God, to do so with the utmost reverence. We read in the history of the Jews that, out of respect to the most holy Name of God, they abstained from uttering it, and used in place of it the word "Adonai," or Lord. God, however, does not forbid us to utter his Holy Name; nay, on the contrary, like a tender father, he loves to hear us pronounce it, as long as we do so with hearts animated alike by love and reverence.

But we must not only speak of God himself with respect, we must do the same of *holy things*, inasmuch as they relate to God. Hence we are bound to speak with reverence of the B. Virgin, who is the Immaculate Mother of God; of the Angels, who minister about his throne; of the Saints, who are his friends and favourites; of the Church, which is the Spouse of his Divine Son; of the Sacraments, which are the channels of his grace; of the Mass, which is the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus; of the Bishops and Priests, who represent him upon earth; of the Holy Scripture, which is his Divine word; of the sacred offices and ceremonies of religion; in

a word, of all that appertains to God and his worship. You can easily understand that to speak of those things that relate to God in a light, and much more in a disrespectful manner, is an outrage offered to God himself.

In the second place, we are commanded by this commandment *to keep our lawful oaths and vows*. An oath, my dear children, means "calling God to witness that we speak the truth." It is the same as *swearing*; to take an oath and to swear are one and the same thing. For example, if a person says "I take God to witness that what I say is true," that is an oath; in other words, it is swearing by the Holy Name of God. But it is not necessary that a person should use the Name of God to make it an oath; it is an oath if he swears by the Saints, by Heaven, by the Holy Scriptures, his own soul, &c. And why so? Because all these relate to God; they are the noblest of God's creatures, and, therefore, if we call them, it is like calling God himself to witness the truth of our words. You will now understand what we mean by *swearing* or *taking oaths*; it is a very different thing from *cursing*, which I shall explain to you just now.

The catechism here tells us that we are bound by this commandment *to keep our lawful oaths*; in other words, if we have promised to do anything which is lawful, and have called God to witness the truth of our promise, we are strictly bound to fulfil it. If you simply *promised* a person to do anything, it would be mean, dishonourable, and unjust to break your word, at least without very good and sufficient reason; but if you have *sworn* to do it, you are bound by a much stricter tie, since you have taken God himself as your witness that you will do what you have promised, and, therefore, if you break your word you commit the terrible outrage of making Him, who is Truth itself, witness to a lie. Hence to break an oath is justly considered a grievous insult to God, and one of the greatest of crimes. This detestable sin, which is called *perjury*, was in former ages punished with death both by the Jewish law and by the laws of many Christian nations; and though a lesser penalty is inflicted now, we cannot doubt that this crime continues to meet with the

most severe punishment from the justice of an outraged God.

So far, my dear children, we have been speaking of *lawful* oaths, but what must we do about those which are *unlawful*? For example, if a person had sworn to revenge himself, or to keep a thing secret which it was his duty to tell, what must he do? Must he keep his oath and commit the sin, or must he break the promise which he has called God to witness? Most certainly he must break it, for though he committed a grievous crime in swearing to do a bad thing, he would commit a fresh sin if he actually did it. Thus, for instance, the forty Jews who, as we read in Holy Scripture, had all sworn not to touch food till they had slain St. Paul, were not bound by their wicked oath. They were guilty of a great sin in taking it, but they would have added to this the grievous crime of murder if they had fulfilled it. This double crime Herod really committed in the case of St. John the Baptist, who fell a victim to the sinful observance of a rash and unlawful oath.

#### MARTYRDOM OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

"Herod," says the Evangelist, "had sent and apprehended John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, the wife of Philip, his brother, because he had married her. For John said to Herod, *It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife*. Now Herodias laid snares for him, and was desirous to put him to death, and could not. For Herod feared John, knowing him to be a great and holy man, and kept him, and, when he heard him, did many things—and he heard him willingly.

"And when a convenient day was come, Herod made a supper for his birthday for the princes, and tribunes, and chief men of Galilee: And when the daughter of the same Herodias had come in, and had danced and pleased Herod and them that were at table with him, the King said to the damsel, *Ask of me what thou wilt and I will give it thee*. And he swore to her, *Whatsoever thou shalt ask I will give it thee, though it be the half of my kingdom*. Who, when she was gone out, said to her mother, *What shall I ask?* But she said, *The head of John the Baptist*: And when she was come in immediately with haste to the King, she asked, saying, *I will that forthwith thou give me in a dish the head of John the Baptist*.

"And the king was struck sad. Yet because of his oath, and because of them that were with him at table, he would not displease her: but sending an executioner, he commanded that his head

should be brought in a dish. And he beheaded him in prison, and brought his head in a dish, and gave it to the damsel, and the damsel gave it to her mother. Which his disciples hearing, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb" (Mark vi).

We come now to speak of *vows*, which the catechism tells us we are bound to keep whenever they are *lawful*. But what is a vow? It is a solemn promise made to God. Thus you see a vow is very different from an *oath*, which is calling God to witness the truth of what we say, or of some promise that we make. It also differs from a *good resolution*, which is simply an intention of doing something pleasing to God; whereas a vow is a strict engagement, which we freely take upon ourselves, binding ourselves before God to do something or to leave something undone. For example, it was very common in past ages for a king or general going out to battle to promise to build a church or monastery, or offer some rich gift to God, if victory blessed his arms. Again, we read in the lives of the Saints of many who devoted themselves, by vow, to serve the sick, to visit and ransom prisoners, to embrace the state of holy virginity, to enter a religious order, &c. ; in other words, they promised God to do these good works in his honour. Such promises or vows are, of course, strictly binding; to break them would be a grievous outrage to the God to whom they are made. For if it be considered among men an insult and injustice to others if we break the word which we have pledged, how great an outrage must it be to the Lord of Heaven, if we violate the solemn promise which we have made to him! Wherefore the Holy Scripture says, "If thou hast vowed anything to God, defer not to pay it; for an unfaithful and foolish vow displeaseth him. And it is much better not to vow, than after a vow not to perform the things promised" (Eccles. v. 4, 5).

We must notice, however, that *unlawful* vows are not to be kept any more than unlawful oaths. In other words, if a person were so wicked as to insult God by promising him to do a sinful thing, he would, of course, commit a fresh sin by doing it.

To make a vow, or promise, to Almighty God to do

some work of piety or charity in his honour, is in itself an act of religion, and, no doubt, pleasing to God when done with proper prudence and discretion. But as it imposes upon him, who makes it, a strict obligation of fulfilling it, a vow should certainly not be made rashly, or without the advice of a confessor. For example, you wish to honour our B. Lady by the daily recital of her rosary or litany. Make a *good resolution* to perform this act of devotion, but do not make an express *promise*, for if you do, you bind yourself by a strict obligation, and are guilty of sin if you omit it. Remember the words of the wise man, "It is much better not to vow, than after a vow not to perform the things promised." If, however, a person has made a rash or imprudent vow, or one which he finds himself unable to fulfil, a confessor has in most cases power to dispense with it, or to commute, that is, change it into some other good work which his penitent is better able to perform.

Q. What does the second Commandment forbid?

A. The second Commandment forbids all false, rash, unjust, and unnecessary oaths; as also blaspheming, cursing, and profane words.

Q. Is it ever lawful to swear, or to take an oath?

A. It is lawful to swear, or to take an oath, only when God's honour, or our own, or our neighbour's good requires it.

From these answers, my dear children, you see that there are four different sins forbidden by this commandment, namely—

1. *Swearing*, whenever the *oath* which we take is either *false*, *rash*, *unjust*, or *unnecessary*.
2. *Blaspheming*.
3. *Cursing*.
4. Making use of *profane words*.

These sins are all opposed to that reverence which we are bound by this commandment to use in speaking of God and everything that is sacred and holy.

In the first place we are forbidden to *swear*, whenever the oath which we take is either *false*, *rash*, *unjust*, or *unnecessary*. For to swear, that is, to call God or his Saints or holy things to witness the truth of what we say,



is not a sin in itself ; on the contrary, *it is lawful to swear or to take an oath*, nay, it is even an act of piety and religion to do so in cases where *God's honour, or our own, or our neighbour's good requires it*. Hence Almighty God said to the Jews in the Old Law, "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and thou shalt swear by his Name" (Deut. vi. 13). Thus the king swears to rule his people justly, the soldier to be faithful to his prince, the judge to pass sentence according to the laws, the witness to speak the truth in a court of justice ; and neither king, nor soldier, nor judge, nor witness commits any sin by so doing ; on the contrary, they perform an act good in itself and pleasing to God. And why ? Because they fulfil all the conditions which are necessary to render an oath lawful. What, then, are these conditions ? Almighty God has told us them by the mouth of the prophet Jeremias, "Thou shalt swear in truth, in judgment, and in justice" (Jerem. iv. 2). Whoever, therefore, swears with *truth*, with *judgment*, and with *justice*, commits no sin ; but if his oath is wanting in any one of these conditions, he is guilty of a sin against the second commandment.

You will wonder, perhaps, what is the meaning of these words, "Thou shalt swear in truth, in judgment, and in justice ?" I will tell you. To swear in *truth* is to be sure, if you assert something upon oath, that what you say is true, and if you promise something, that you are both able and intend to do what you promise ; moreover, you must actually perform it. To swear in *judgment*, is to swear only when you can form a prudent judgment that there are good and sufficient reasons for taking an oath, as in the case of the examples I have just named to you of a king, a soldier, &c. Finally, to swear in *justice*, is to swear to do what is good and just.

Now, if you will look at the four kinds of oaths, which the catechism tells you are forbidden, you will find that they are all wanting in one or other of these conditions, and it is for this reason that they are sinful. Thus false and rash oaths are opposed to truth, unjust oaths to justice, and in taking unnecessary oaths, we swear without that prudent judgment which we are obliged to form of their

necessity. All such oaths are therefore sinful, but they are not all equally grievous in the sight of God. A false oath is a greater sin than a rash one, and an unjust oath is far more grievous than one which is simply unnecessary.

I told you just now that to swear, or take an oath, is to call God, or his Saints, or holy things to witness the truth of what we say or promise. From this you will see how great is the guilt of him who takes a *false* oath, or, in other words, commits the crime of *perjury*. He comes before the great God of heaven, that God who is the very Truth, with a lie on his lips, and asks of God either himself, or by his Saints, or by the sacred things of religion which immediately relate to him, to bear witness to the lie which he utters. Can you imagine a more grievous outrage to God than this? Truly it is a wonder of the Divine Goodness that God, who holds the life of the perjurer in his hands, does not strike him dead in the very act of offering him so heinous an insult.

*Rash* oaths are the next kind of oaths here mentioned. To swear rashly is to swear without thought or reflection, not thinking, in fact, whether that which you swear is true or false. People who have the unhappy habit of swearing, continually take rash oaths, and thus they expose themselves to the danger of taking false ones. And although it is not so grievous a sin to swear rashly, as it is deliberately to call God to witness a falsehood, yet it is undoubtedly a great insult to him to ask him to witness the truth of what *may* be a lie, since we have not taken the trouble to reflect whether it be true or false. The condition of truth necessary for a lawful oath requires that we should be absolutely certain of the truth of what we swear to.

The third kind of oaths forbidden by this commandment are *unjust* ones, that is, oaths in which we swear to do something sinful. Unjust oaths are a most grievous sin in the sight of God, for what can be more horrible than to call God to witness that we will not obey him? For example, a man receives an injury and swears to revenge himself. In other words, he calls God to witness

that he will do what God has strictly forbidden—namely, revenge himself on his fellow-creature. He thereby denies the right of God to govern him, sets himself up in his stead, and calls God to witness that he does so.

The fourth and last kind of oaths here spoken of are *unnecessary* ones—namely, those which are taken without just and sufficient reason. Though not so grievous in the sight of God as those which are false, rash, or unjust, they are, nevertheless, very displeasing to him. For the Adorable Name of God is not to be treated as a mere by-word, nor is the great Lord of Heaven and Earth to be called upon to witness every trifle. An oath is a holy and a sacred act, and is only to be taken when the glory of God or the good of our neighbour requires it, as in the case of those oaths which are administered by public authority. So few, indeed, are the occasions when it is lawful to swear, that our B. Lord expressly forbids it in the Gospel in these plain and severe words:—

“You have heard,” said he to the Jews, “that it was said to them of old, *Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but thou shalt perform thy oaths to the Lord*. But I say to you, not to swear at all, neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God, nor by the earth, for it is his footstool, nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King; neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your speech be *Yea, yea; no, no*; and that which is over and above these is of evil” (Matt. v. 33-37).

These words of our Lord do not, however, apply to those oaths which fulfil the necessary conditions of truth, justice, and judgment, but to those false, rash, unjust, and unnecessary oaths which are forbidden by this commandment.

We come now to speak of the second sin forbidden by this commandment, which is the grievous crime of *blasphemy*. By blasphemy we mean speaking injuriously of God, or his Saints and Angels, or sacred things. This is, indeed, a crime which we should expect to find only among the devils in hell. For can it be possible that man, the creature of God, redeemed by the Blood of the

Son of God, receiving daily his existence and innumerable benefits from the hand of God, should be found capable of speaking injuriously of God, or what immediately relates to him? And yet, unhappily, it is so. Many, indeed, blaspheme that which they know not; for example, those who, not belonging to our holy religion, and misled by prejudice and false teachers, misrepresent Catholic Doctrine, mock at the ceremonies of the Church, or speak disrespectfully of our B. Lady, or the Saints, or the Holy Sacraments; but there are others, alas! Catholics in name only, who blaspheme that which they *do* know, by murmuring against the Justice or Providence of God, jesting about holy things, or mocking at the ministers of the Church. You can easily understand how heinous this crime is in the sight of God. In the Old Law the blasphemer was, by the command of God himself, sentenced to death, and stoned in the sight of all the people, and in the laws of many Christian nations we find the severest punishments enacted against this crime; as, for example, in the laws of St. Louis, King of France, who ordered the tongue of the blasphemer to be pierced with a red-hot iron. Many instances are likewise recorded, in which God has, in his Justice, taken upon himself at once to avenge his own honour, and struck the blasphemer dead in the very act of insulting him.

#### THE BLASPHEMER STONED TO DEATH.

“And behold,” says Moses, in the Book of Leviticus, “there went out the son of a woman of Israel and fell at words in the camp with a man of Israel. And when he had blasphemed the Name, and had cursed it, he was brought to Moses. And they put him in prison till they might know what the Lord would command.

“And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, *Bring forth the blasphemer without the camp, and let them that heard him put their hands upon his head, and let all the people stone him. And thou shalt speak to the children of Israel, ‘He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, dying let him die; all the multitude shall stone him, whether he be a native or a stranger.’*

“And Moses spoke to the children of Israel, and they brought forth him that had blasphemed without the camp, and they stoned him. And the children of Israel did as the Lord had commanded Moses” (Levit. xxiv. 10-23).

## PUNISHMENT OF SENNACHERIB.

The holy king Ezechias, who ruled over the kingdom of Juda shortly before the time of the Babylonian captivity, was on one occasion besieged in Jerusalem by the Assyrian general, Rabshaces, who had been sent by King Sennacherib to demand the surrender of the city. Rabshaces, in the name of his master, uttered horrible blasphemies against the God of heaven, who, he assured the Jews, would be no more able to protect his people, than the idols whom they worshipped had been able to protect the neighbouring nations. Being compelled to abandon the siege, in order to lead his army against the King of Ethiopia, he wrote a letter to Ezechias, in which he repeated his former blasphemies, and threatened, upon his return, to destroy the holy city, if it did not appease his master's anger by a timely submission. The pious Ezechias was struck with horror at the words of the letter, and, carrying it into the temple of God, he there spread it open, and with many tears and fervent prayers besought the Lord to avenge the insult offered to him upon the head of the blasphemer. He then repaired, for consolation and advice, to the holy prophet Isaias, and was assured by him, on the part of God, that the blasphemies uttered against the Lord should not remain unpunished.

"And it came to pass that night," says the sacred writer, "that an Angel of the Lord came and slew, in the camp of the Assyrians, a hundred and eighty-five thousand. And when he rose early in the morning, he saw all the bodies of the dead. And Sennacherib departing, went away, and he returned and abode in Nineve. And as he was worshipping in the temple of Nesroch his god, his sons slew him with the sword, and Asarhaddon his son reigned in his stead" (4 Kings xviii., xix.).

## THE BLASPHEMER STRUCK BLIND.

A few years ago the town of Nottingham was visited with a most awful thunderstorm, the effects of which were most disastrous. The lower part of the town was flooded, and the poorer classes, who inhabited cellars, as well as many shopkeepers, suffered severely. Among those who sought shelter from the pitiless storm in the Milton's Head public-house, was a young man, a lace-maker by trade. For some time he amused himself with ridiculing the fears of the company, but his language, which was from the first light and unbecoming, became, at last, impious and profane. He used the Holy Name of God in the most blasphemous manner, and, with bitter oaths, expressed a wish that a thunderbolt might come down and strike the company blind. Then, raising himself, he looked through the skylight over the room in which they were sitting, and, with profane gestures, defied the lightning. At that moment a vivid flash entered the room, and in an instant he was lying speechless on the floor. He was taken up by the trembling bystanders,

none of whom were injured, and laid upon a couch. The first words he uttered, on recovering his speech, were, "God forgive me!" He remained, however, blind, and was removed to the general hospital.—*Catholic Weekly Instructor*.

### THE BURIED CRUCIFIX.

About the beginning of the present century there lived in Lancashire, among the Aughton congregation, a good religious woman named Mrs. Ann Spencer, who occupied a farmhouse on the Prescott road. In the same neighbourhood there dwelt with his father a young farmer named Charles King, who died a few years since at an advanced age, in the adjoining parish of Lydiate. The following history was related by Mr. King to the priest who attended him on his deathbed, and is given in his own words.

"About sixty years ago it happened that my neighbour, Mrs. Spencer, had a boat-load of manure to be carted from the canal. It was customary then, as indeed it is now, for the neighbours to help with their teams, in order that the work might be got through speedily. I accordingly brought my father's team to assist, but having to go to Liverpool in the afternoon, I did not stay for the dinner given on such occasions. The next morning I went again, and found Ann Spencer very indignant at some impiety which her company had been guilty of the previous day. It seems that, after dinner, when most of the party had left, there remained five young men, Protestants, in the room. Now there happened to be a crucifix over the chimney-piece, which they took down and began to ridicule. They said it was the Papists' God, &c. 'Let us go,' said one, 'and bury it, and see if it will rise again in three days.' They carried their blasphemy into effect, and actually dug a hole in the ground, into which they thrust it. Mrs. Spencer, who was engaged in another part of the house, did not hear of the profanity till afterwards. In relating it to me she was very much moved, and said, 'Mark my words, not one of those who took part in this blasphemy will die in his bed.' I did mark her words, and have lived long enough to witness their exact fulfilment. These men are all dead, and not one of them died in his bed. Two were brothers (he mentioned their names); one was killed by falling out of his cart, the other cut his throat in a barn. A servant-man of theirs was also present, and he was killed by his team. Another drowned himself in a pit, and the fifth died in his chair."

Among the many impostures and superstitions of this *enlightened* age is the doctrine of Spiritualism, or a belief that we can communicate directly and in a palpable and material manner with the spirits of the departed. The following awful event which has just happened, and has been recorded in almost every newspaper throughout the

land, shows us at the same time the impious tendency of such attempts, and the severe judgments which the sin of blasphemy, even in this life, frequently calls down from the hand of God.

“DIED BY THE VISITATION OF GOD.”

In the month of November, 1873, a *seance* or spiritualistic service was held in the Athenæum Assembly Rooms, in Birmingham, which was attended by the principal believers in spiritualism residing in the neighbourhood. Among the rest was a tradesman of the town, who was well known among the spiritualists as a successful medium, and who addressed the meeting on the subject of his past experiences. Among other things he declared to them that at a certain *seance* he had shaken hands with the Apostle Peter, and that he had on that occasion felt the Apostle's hand firmly clasped within his own. From this he went on to argue that it was very easy to understand how the Apostle Thomas put his hand into our Lord's side, or rather into that which was a representation or personification of our Redeemer. No sooner had he uttered this awful blasphemy than he fell back upon his chair a corpse. This terrible judgment produced a vivid impression on all who were present, and the meeting broke up in the wildest excitement.

At the inquest, held a few days after, over the body of the deceased spiritualist, the usual verdict was declared, the words of which, in such a case, cannot fail to strike the mind as having a special and terrible meaning, “Died by the visitation of God.”—*Liverpool Mercury and other Journals*.

The third sin forbidden by this commandment is that of *cursing*. To curse is to call down some evil upon ourselves or others; for example, if a person were to say, “May you be struck dead,” or “Bad luck to you,” those are curses. You see it is different from merely *wishing* evil to others in your heart, it is praying that evil may happen. There is always a prayer either expressed or implied in a curse. Indeed it is this which makes cursing a sin against the second Commandment, otherwise it would only be a sin against charity, that is, against the love we owe our neighbour for the sake of God. But when we pray that some evil may befall him, besides not loving him and wishing him well, which charity requires, we do also what is most injurious to God himself by calling on him to execute our guilty wishes. Almighty God says to us in the Holy Scripture, “Revenge is mine, and I will repay”

(Rom. xii. 19); that is, "Leave all vengeance to me. I shall punish those who injure you with strict justice unless they sincerely repent." But what does the curser say? "No, O Lord; revenge is not yours, it is mine. At least it is for me to will it, and for you only to execute my will. You must not give this man time to repent; you must punish him at once, because I wish it. You, who loved to give sight to the blind and to raise the dead to life, must strike this man blind and that other one dead because I say so. You, who shed the last drop of your blood to save the poor sinner from hell, must condemn this enemy of mine, nay, perhaps this wife, this child, to eternal damnation, and give them no further hope of salvation." My dear children, you are horrified, and no wonder, at such terrible impiety. You think that it is impossible that any one could dare thus to speak to God. Alas! it is what the habitual curser says, perhaps, twenty times a day, whenever, for example, he uses such words as these—"God strike you blind! God strike you dead!" &c. Ah! how much it is to be feared that a just and outraged God will cause the curses of the wicked to fall with tenfold weight upon their own heads!

It happens not unfrequently that the habitual curser, besides invoking the curse of God on his work, his cattle, his neighbours, his children, his wife, actually in as many words calls it down upon his own head; in other words, he prays God, who is infinitely Just and infinitely Powerful, to send him bad luck, to strike him dead, or to damn him for all eternity. This kind of cursing is what the Jews were guilty of in the desert, when they murmured and cried out, "Would to God that we may die in this vast wilderness!" (Numb. xiv. 3). And they were guilty of the same when they sought our Lord's death, calling out to Pilate, who strove to release him, "His blood be upon us, and upon our children!" (Matt. xxvii. 25). Almighty God heard their wicked prayers and granted them. Of the mighty multitude who came out of Egypt, all who had attained the age of manhood, except only Josue and Caleb, perished in the wilderness; and you know how the innocent Blood of the Lamb of God, shed



by the hands of the Jews, has drawn down the Divine vengeance on this guilty nation. Driven from their country, and scattered over the face of the earth, they are a living monument of the Justice of God on those who insolently brave his anger. And so it will be, no doubt, with those wicked sinners who have the habit of invoking the Divine vengeance on their own heads. Often, as we read in history, has God heard such prayers, and granted the evil asked for, even while the words of the curse were yet upon the lips of the speaker; and if sometimes in his Mercy he delays his vengeance, there is no doubt that, if they do not sincerely repent, the punishment will fall upon them with still greater severity either in this or in the next life.

Sometimes you will hear the curser excuse himself by saying that he curses by habit, and that he does not really wish any evil from his heart, nor intend what his words imply. Almighty God accepts of no such excuse. If a person curses by habit, he is guilty of a grievous sin in having formed so wicked a habit, and is equally guilty and accountable for what he says, as long as he does not sincerely strive to correct it. This he can always do by the grace of God, which is all powerful, but he must take the proper means to obtain it. He must pray earnestly to God for grace to overcome this wicked practice, carefully examine his conscience each evening, making sincere acts of sorrow for past sins and fresh resolutions for the ensuing day, and approach often to the Holy Sacraments. He must also avoid the company of cursers, watch carefully over his temper, and try to check his anger by a little prayer whenever he finds it rising. Let him do this, and he will soon find that each day the number of his curses will grow less and less, till at length he will have cured himself entirely of this unhappy sin, which is the cause of the eternal damnation of so many souls.

I will now tell you a story on this subject, which is handed down to us by Eusebius, one of the earliest writers of Church history.

## THE THREE CURSERS.

Three men, who were addicted to the sin of cursing, were in the habit of uttering imprecations on their own heads in order to make people believe their assertions. One used to pray that he might be burned alive if his words were not true, the second that he might be seized with a fit of sickness, and the third that he might be struck blind. In a short time they all obtained what they asked. The first was burned alive with his whole family; the second was afflicted with a frightful disease from head to foot; and the third was so touched with fear at the sight of the judgments which had fallen on his companions, that he sincerely repented, and by reason of the abundant tears which he shed over his past sins, lost the use of his sight. Thus did Almighty God, while he punished each for his sin according to the words of his curse, make that very punishment turn to the eternal salvation of him who sincerely repented.—*Eusebius' Ch. Hist.*

The last sin forbidden by this commandment is the wicked habit of speaking *profane words*. By profane words we mean those bad words which are neither oaths nor curses, and which contain nothing blasphemous or indecent, but which are, nevertheless, unbecoming in the mouth of a Christian—such, for example, as the words “what the hell,” “bloody,” “devilish,” &c. Almighty God warns us in the Holy Scripture that we shall have at the day of judgment to render an account of every idle word, how much more, then, of those which are actually profane! To these we may add the profane use of the Holy Name of God; for instance, when a person has a habit of saying in common conversation, “O God,” “O Lord,” “O Christ!” &c. Such expressions, though not mortal sins, are most displeasing to God, for his Holy Name should never be taken *in vain*; that is, without due cause and proper respect. Some children are so foolish as to imagine that it makes them look big and like men if they season their speech with profane words. This is the mark of a weak mind; for a modest, simple, and candid way of speaking is one of the most pleasing ornaments of youth.

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## TWENTY-SEVENTH INSTRUCTION.

*The Third Commandment. What it commands—The obligation of hearing Mass—Sunday a day of rest. What it forbids—Unnecessary servile work, and all profanation of the Lord's Day—Innocent recreation not forbidden—Why we are to rest from work.*

**Q.** What is the third Commandment?

**A.** The third Commandment is, "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day."

The third commandment instructs us in the obligation we are under of devoting one particular day in the week to the worship of Almighty God—*Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day.* Every day, indeed, belongs to God, since man is the creature of God and time is God's gift; hence the catechism tells us that we are bound to serve God *all our days*. It is, however, fitting that besides rendering to him this general service by daily prayer and the keeping of his commandments, we should also devote certain days in a special manner to his worship. Upon these days we *rest*, that is, abstain from our daily work, and we do so in order to be able to spend a portion of our time in adoring God, thanking him for his daily favours, and imploring from him those helps and graces which we continually stand in need of both for soul and body. Hence the day set apart for the worship of God is called the *Sabbath*, which means the day of rest, and this is the name which God himself has given to it in the Holy Scripture.

The institution of the Sabbath, my dear children, is as old as the world, for it was immediately after the Creation that God commanded Adam to set apart this day as a day of rest from his ordinary labour, in honour of his own Divine rest from the work of the Creation. "For in six days," says the Scripture, "the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them, and rested on the seventh. Therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and sanctified it" (Gen. ii. 2, 3). In obedience to

the Divine commandment the holy patriarchs, who lived before the time of Moses, devoted the seventh day of the week to the worship of God, spending it with their families in the duties of prayer and sacrifice. It was not, however, till the time of Moses that Almighty God, in giving his commandments on Mount Sinai, explained in express words the manner in which the Sabbath was to be sanctified to his service. "Six days shalt thou labour," he said, "and shall do all thy works. But on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: thou shalt do no work on it, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger that is within thy gates" (Exod. xx. 9, 10). And again God commanded Moses that on the seventh day of the week a special sacrifice of two lambs without spot or blemish should be offered up, in addition to the daily morning and evening sacrifices which were prescribed (Numb. xxviii. 9, 10).

When our B. Lord came down upon earth, he confirmed and established the law respecting the strict observance of the Sabbath, which God had already delivered to the Jews. He showed them, however, that they had fallen into some mistakes regarding the manner of keeping it, and that the exact observance of it did not prevent the performance on that day of works of *necessity* or works of *charity*. He also, no doubt, instructed the Apostles as to the manner in which the Sabbath was to be observed in the Christian Church, and how it was to be sanctified, as soon as the Old Law and the ancient sacrifices should be done away with, by the offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

You will have noticed, my dear children, that the day on which we keep the Sabbath is not the same as that on which it was observed by the Jews. They kept and still keep the Sabbath upon Saturday, we upon Sunday; they on the seventh, we on the first day of the week. Hence the Jews close their shops and attend their synagogues upon Saturday, but Sunday is observed as the day of rest by all Christians, even by those sects who are separated from the Catholic Church. You will ask, what is the

reason of this? It is because the Apostles, who were the first pastors of the Church, by the authority which they had received from our B. Lord to regulate all that regards his public worship, changed the day appointed for the keeping of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday—from the seventh to the first day of the week. And why did they do so? To honour the glorious Resurrection of our Lord and the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, both of which mysteries were accomplished on the first day of the week. From this we may understand how great is the authority of the Church in interpreting or explaining to us the commandments of God—an authority which is acknowledged by the universal practice of the whole Christian world, even of those sects who profess to take the Holy Scriptures as their sole rule of faith, since they observe as the day of rest not the seventh day of the week commanded by the Bible, but the first day, which we know is to be kept holy, only from the tradition and teaching of the Catholic Church.

Q. What are we commanded by the third Commandment?

A. By the third Commandment we are commanded to keep the Sunday holy.

Q. How are we to keep the Sunday holy?

A. We are to keep the Sunday holy by hearing Mass and resting from servile works.

*We are commanded, my dear children, by this commandment, to keep the Sunday holy.* Now the catechism teaches us that there are two things which we must do in order to fulfil this duty—we must hear Mass, and we must also rest or abstain from servile work. It is by hearing Mass and resting from servile work that we consecrate and set apart this day to the service of God.

In the first place, *we must hear Mass.* The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is, as you know, the most sacred, the most solemn, and the highest act of religion. Man cannot worship God in any way that is so worthy of him and so pleasing in his sight as by offering up or assisting at Mass. And why so? Because the Mass is the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus

Christ, the Second Person of the B. Trinity, and the Beloved Son of the Eternal Father. Hence it is a Sacrifice of infinite value, and one with which Almighty God cannot fail to be well pleased. In no way, therefore, can we honour God so profoundly, atone for our sins so effectually, or obtain his grace so securely, as by hearing Mass devoutly and uniting our prayers and intentions with those of the priest. For this reason the Church teaches us that one of the chief means of sanctifying the Sunday is to assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and has moreover laid upon us a strict injunction, which you will find among the commandments of the Church, not to be absent from this duty *under pain of mortal sin*.

But notice that we are bound not only to be *present* at Mass, but to assist at it with *attention* and *devotion*. To do this we must banish from our minds all wilful distractions, and spend the time of Mass in fervent prayer and good and holy thoughts. We should also assist at Mass with profound *reverence*, kneeling respectfully in body and prostrate in soul before that Lord of heaven and earth who is present upon the altar. Ah, if we could only see with our eyes what we know by faith takes place at the holy Mass, we should be lost in admiration, reverence, and love! We should behold the Son of God, equal in all things to his Eternal Father, coming down, as it were, from his throne of glory, concealing the majesty and splendour of his Godhead and of his Glorified Body under the form of a little host, and offered to God for the sins and wants of man by the hands of the priest. And all around we should behold the Angels bowing in profound adoration, while they sing with heavenly voices that song, which cannot be heard by mortal ears, but which we hope one day to sing with them in Paradise, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Oh! my dear children, never profane these awful mysteries by any bad behaviour at the time of Mass, for example, by playing, looking round, whispering or talking. Remember that our B. Lord sees you from the altar, and that you grieve him and prevent him from bestowing his grace upon you by such conduct. The

Angels also see you, they are struck with horror, and would, out of a holy zeal, severely punish you, did not the Mercy of God restrain them.

There is another point which we must take notice of in regard to the obligation of hearing Mass, and that is, that we are bound to be present during the *whole* of the Mass; for it is the Mass, and not a part of it only, that we are bound to hear. If any one, therefore, comes late to Mass or goes away before it is finished, he is guilty of sin, which is mortal or venial according to circumstances. If he has been wilfully absent from a considerable portion of the Mass, or from an important part of it, he has been guilty of grievous sin; but if he has missed only a small part of the Mass he is still guilty of sin, though the offence is only venial. You will ask me, perhaps, how late a person must be to cause him to miss Mass and commit a mortal sin. This is very difficult to determine. It is commonly thought, however, that if a person comes in to Mass after the Gospel is ended, he does not fulfil the obligation, and is consequently guilty of grievous sin. Such a one, if possible, must stay to hear another Mass, or go elsewhere for the purpose, so that he may be able to fulfil the law of the Church. I may remark that persons who are in the habit of coming late to church through their own fault are very often guilty of grievous sin, for though they may come in before the Gospel is ended, yet they expose themselves to the imminent danger of missing a considerable portion of the Holy Sacrifice. When, therefore, you come to Mass, take care to be at church a few minutes before it commences, not only that you may be in no danger of being late, but also that you may have time to recollect yourselves and prepare your minds for the great mysteries at which you are about to assist. Nothing can be more unbecoming, irreverent, and disedifying than for people to make a practice of crowding in when the Mass is already beginning, or of leaving church before it is finished, or while the priest is yet at the altar.

You see, my dear children, from what I have told you, how strict is the obligation of hearing Mass upon

Sunday. There are, however, certain occasions in which it would be no sin to be absent from it. For example, if you were laid up at home by serious illness, or were at such a distance from church that you could not be present at Mass without great difficulty, you would be excused from attending. Again, it would be no sin to miss Mass if you had to stay at home to nurse a sick person, or to keep the house while the rest of the family went to church. In such cases, however, an arrangement should be made by which the members of the family might take it in turn to hear Mass, Sunday about, or if there is more than one Mass, by which some might go to the early and some to the later Mass, and thus all might be able to fulfil the obligation. With regard to sickness and distance from church, we must always remember that it is not a slight sickness or a moderate distance which will excuse us, but such an illness or distance as will render it a serious difficulty to be present. If you be in doubt whether you are really excused, be guided by the advice of your confessor, when you are able to consult him, or otherwise of some pious and prudent person.

We read in the Lives of the Saints many beautiful examples of the fidelity displayed by the early Christians in fulfilling this duty even at the peril of their lives.

#### ST. SATURNINUS AND THE MARTYRS OF AFRICA.

During the cruel persecution of the Emperor Maximian, forty-nine Christians had assembled in a private house at Abitina, a city of Africa, to assist at the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which was said by the priest Saturninus. The officers of justice broke into the house during the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries, arrested those who were present, and conveyed them before the public tribunal under a guard of soldiers. By order of the judge they were sent in chains to Carthage, the capital city of the province, where they were again examined and cruelly tortured. Being asked by the Proconsul why they had assembled together in spite of the decrees of the Emperor, St. Saturninus answered in the name of the rest, "It is because we are not allowed to be absent from the Sacred Mysteries. This is the commandment and teaching of the Divine Law. This law we faithfully observe, and for it we are ready to lay down our lives."

Among these glorious confessors of the faith, who were of every age, sex, and condition, was a young boy named Hilarion, whom, on



account of his tender years, the Proconsul thought that he would have no difficulty in overcoming. He accordingly threatened him with the rod and other punishments with which children are wont to be chastised, little knowing that it is God himself who fights in his martyrs. Hilarion laughed at his threats, exclaiming aloud that he was a Christian, and one of those who had been at the Collect, the name then given to the sacred assembly. Upon this the Proconsul said, "I will cut off your nose and your ears." "You may do so," replied the child, "but I am still a Christian." Upon this the judge ordered him to be cast with the rest into prison, where those, who had survived the tortures inflicted upon them, shortly after fell victims to starvation and the hardships of their confinement.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

How powerfully does the example of these generous martyrs condemn the sloth of those careless and lukewarm Christians, who make the merest trifle an excuse for not assisting at the Holy Sacrifice!

To keep the Sunday holy, it is not, however, sufficient to hear Mass, we must also, as the catechism says, *rest from servile work*. "Thou shalt do no work on it, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger that is within thy gates." You will ask me what is meant by *servile work*, which is what Almighty God here forbids. By *servile work* we mean *manual labour*, in other words, hard work done with the hands, such as that which servants, labourers, mechanics, &c., usually perform. Thus, for example, digging is servile work, so also are ploughing, haymaking, building, joinering, and working in the coal pit or factory. Again, it is servile work to follow the trade of a baker, butcher, watchmaker, tailor, or shoemaker. There are other works, also, which are usually performed by females that are servile by nature, for instance, sewing or knitting, scouring, washing, and ironing. All these employments, and others of a similar nature, are strictly forbidden upon Sunday; if they were not, Sunday would be no longer a day of rest, but a day of labour. There are other kinds of works, however, which are not servile, because they are performed with the mind rather than with the body, and which are, therefore, not forbidden upon Sunday. Such are reading, writing, drawing, and painting; I mean painting pictures, not walls or

houses. Such works as these do not break the Sunday, because there is no great bodily labour attending them.

We read in Holy Scripture that when Almighty God sent the manna from heaven to feed the Israelites in the desert, he strictly forbade them to gather any on the Sabbath. To prevent the necessity of their doing so, he told them to collect on the day before the Sabbath what would be sufficient for the wants of that and the following day. Moreover, he ordered that those who broke the third commandment by working on the Sabbath should be most severely punished. Thus we find that on one occasion, while the Jews were in the desert, it happened that a man was found gathering sticks upon the Sabbath-day. He was brought for punishment to Moses and Aaron, who consulted the Almighty as to what was to be done with him. The answer which God gave shows us the grievous nature of this sin, and the severe punishment which it deserves. "Let that man die," said he, "and let all the multitude stone him without the camp" (Numb. xv. 35). Now, if the crime of that man in gathering a few sticks upon the Jewish Sabbath was so great, and the punishment which he received by God's own order was so severe, how much greater must be the guilt of Christians, and how much more terrible will not their punishment be, if they profane, or cause others to profane, by servile work, the Christian Sabbath—a day consecrated to God in honour of such sublime mysteries!

There are two reasons, however, which excuse the performance of servile work upon Sunday, and render it no longer sinful. These are *necessity* and *charity*. We are permitted to do on Sunday work which is of absolute necessity, and which cannot be performed upon a week day. We are also allowed in certain cases to work out of a motive of charity to our neighbour. I will explain what I mean by two examples taken from the holy Gospel.

#### THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS AND THE EARS OF CORN.

It happened one Sabbath-day that as our B. Lord was walking through a corn-field with his disciples, the latter, being hungry, gathered a few ears of corn and began to eat them. In doing so

they did not commit any theft, since it was the custom of the country and allowed by the law, that whoever should pass through a corn-field or vineyard might eat of the corn or of the grapes as he passed along, provided that he did not stop or go aside to gather. Now some of the Pharisees, having heard of this, took offence, and came to our Lord to lay a complaint against his disciples as breakers of the Sabbath. "Behold," said they, "thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath-day." Our B. Lord, however, took up their defence, and showed that they were to be excused, inasmuch as they had acted through hunger and real necessity.

"Have you never heard," said he, "what David did when he had need, and was hungry himself and those that were with him? How he went into the house of God under Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the loaves of proposition, which was not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave to those who were with him?" And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Matt. xii. 1, &c.; Mark ii. 23, &c.)

From this example you see how a strict *necessity* excuses the performance of servile work upon the Sabbath, since, as our Lord showed the Jews, it excused in David and his followers a still greater violation of the law, viz., the eating of the consecrated shewbread. From the following history we shall learn that *charity*, or the performance of some great work of mercy, likewise excuses us from the observance of the law.

#### THE INFIRM WOMAN HEALED BY OUR LORD.

"And he was teaching," says the Scripture, "in their synagogue on the Sabbath. And behold there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and she was bowed together, neither could she look upwards at all. Whom when Jesus saw, he called her unto him, and said to her, *Woman, thou art delivered from thy infirmity*. And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight and glorified God.

"And the ruler of the synagogue being angry that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, answering, said to the multitude, *Six days there are wherein you ought to work. In them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath-day*. And the Lord answering him said, *Ye hypocrites, doth not every one of you on the Sabbath-day loose his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead them to water? And ought not the daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath-day?* And when he had said these things all his adversaries were ashamed" (Luke xiii. 10, &c.)

Although, as we have seen, necessity and charity often excuse the performance of servile work upon Sunday, we must remember that this is to be understood of a strict necessity and a pressing call of charity. For example, some sudden accident occurs upon the railway. If the damage done to the line be not repaired at once, all traffic will be interrupted, and the lives of many endangered. The machinery breaks down at some large manufactory. If not set right on the Sunday, hundreds will be thrown out of employment on the Monday morning. Again the fires must be kept up at some kiln or furnace, or else the material which is being manufactured will be all spoiled. In these and similar cases it is allowable to work, because there is a real necessity for it, and great evil would arise and serious loss if the work were not done. But we must be careful not to excuse ourselves too easily, or to imagine that there is a necessity when really there is none. Those who are negligent in the performance of their religious duties often make excuses for themselves which certainly God will not admit. A tailor, for example, works upon Sunday to complete an order required upon Monday, but which by a little extra effort during the week or by engaging more hands, he might have already despatched. A woman washes and mends her children's clothes on the Sunday morning. She says that she *must* do it, for that the children cannot go dirty or ragged to chapel. But could she not, by a little foresight, have provided for this by washing and mending them during the week? Again, a shoemaker works at his trade, and makes or mends shoes upon a Sunday. He says that he cannot support his family unless he works on Sunday; they are poor and in want, and he must do his best for them. I answer, better a thousand times be poor, than profane that day by servile work which God has commanded us to keep holy. Better the little you earn during the week with God's blessing, than great earnings made upon Sunday with his curse. But, indeed, Sunday's earnings never did enrich any one, nor ever will, for they have the blight of God's curse upon them. It is a common but a very true saying that money badly got never caused any one to

thrive. You will understand what I mean from the following story.

#### THE SHOEMAKER AND THE MERCHANT.

At the beginning of this century there lived at Lyons a poor shoemaker named Berthier, who was to be seen working at his bench every Sunday morning. In the same street, and opposite to his house, dwelt a wealthy merchant, who, being a good Catholic, was grieved to see his poorer neighbour neglecting the duties of his religion, and determined if possible to reclaim him. Accordingly one day he spoke to him on the subject, and represented to him how much he offended God by working on Sunday. The shoemaker replied that it was necessity which compelled him to work. "You that are rich," added he, "can well afford to be idle one day in the week, but as for me, I could neither finish my work nor support my family if I did not labour on the Sunday." "My good friend," replied the merchant, "all I ask of you is to give my advice a fair trial. But I do not wish that you should be the loser by so doing. Promise me that you will do no work, and will attend Mass upon Sunday for the next six months, and I engage to make good all the losses you sustain by following my advice. Do you accept my offer?" "Willingly," replied Berthier. "It is much easier for me to rest than to work, so that, as I am not in any case to be the loser, it is a bargain."

At the end of the six months the merchant paid another visit to the shoemaker. "My friend," said he, "I have been delighted to see that you have kept your promise. Tell me, now, the amount of your losses, for I have engaged to make them good." "Ah, sir," replied Berthier, "it is I that am in *your* debt, not you in *mine*, for I have been the gainer by our agreement." "In what way?" said the merchant. "I will tell you," replied the shoemaker. "At first I found a little inconvenience in not having my work completed, but as I was determined to keep up to my promise, I learned to push on matters during the week, and not to undertake more than I could accomplish. Soon I found that, by resting on the Sunday, I was so much refreshed and strengthened in body and mind as to be able to do as much work in the six days as I had before done in the seven. Meanwhile I attended church regularly with my family, and there heard many excellent instructions, which showed me the danger in which I had been of losing my soul for a paltry gain. Accordingly, I began to prepare for my confession, which I had long neglected. I made it to the best of my power, and received Holy Communion. I need not say that the peace and joy which I have felt since is far beyond any temporal gain; but indeed I have lost nothing, for, somehow or other, I am quite as well off as before." "I am delighted to hear it," said the merchant; "but tell me, how are matters going on now between yourself and your wife, for formerly, as every one knows, there was

not a day without a quarrel?" "It is too true," said Berthier, "and I used to think that my poor wife was always in fault; but when I became better instructed I began to see that she was not always wrong, neither was I always right; so when we went to confession we made it up to bear with each other and live peaceably for the time to come. Since then peace and happiness have reigned in our house, and we have now time to devote ourselves to the care of our children." "I congratulate you on your happiness," said the merchant, "and I must acknowledge that I am not really in your debt, since you have derived profit rather than loss from my advice. But see, here is the money which I intended for you; take it as a mark of my friendship. I am only too happy in having been the means of showing you how true it is that no one ever loses by what he does for God."—*Power's Catechism*.

To neglect Mass, and to do servile work upon Sundays, are, as we have seen, the two principal sins which are forbidden by the third commandment, inasmuch as they are opposed to the two great duties which it enjoins. We must not forget, however, that there are many other ways of profaning the Lord's day. For example, those who spend Sunday in drinking, gambling, sinful amusements, or in riotous and disorderly conduct, profane this sacred day; so also do those who buy, sell, and trade as they would on a week day, unless they are excused by some good and sufficient reason. All who act in this manner are guilty of a sin against the third commandment, since, instead of making Sunday truly the Lord's day by devoting a considerable portion of it to his Divine worship, they make it a day of mere amusement and sinful indulgence, or else of worldly business and profit.

You will sometimes hear it said that Catholics are not sufficiently strict in this respect, and that they allow games and amusements upon Sunday, a thing which Protestants have a great horror of. It is true, my dear children, that the Church does allow innocent recreation upon Sunday, as long as we have fulfilled the duty we owe to God by giving a due proportion of the day to his Worship. For piety does not consist in a long face, but in a pure and loving heart; and our good God does not wish to be served in sadness and melancholy, but in joy and gladness. Moreover, God has expressly given us the Sabbath as a day of *rest*; that is, a day on which we may

relax the mind and refresh the body, to prepare ourselves to enter with renewed vigour on the work of the succeeding week. Hence there is no harm, after you have performed the religious duties of Sunday, in your enjoying an innocent game at play, or a pleasant walk in the country. But we should be careful to avoid any amusement which is unbecoming the holiness of a day consecrated to the worship of God, or which, owing to the habits and prejudices of those among whom we live, can reasonably become to them an occasion of offence or scandal.

To buy and sell, to barter and traffic upon Sunday is, as I have said, a profanation of that day which God has commanded to be kept holy and consequently free from the cares and anxieties of daily life. But there are certain cases in which such dealings are permitted on the ground of necessity or charity. For example, a druggist commits no sin by selling upon Sunday medicines required for the relief of the sick ; and, again, those who keep houses of refreshment are permitted to supply the wants of the passing traveller. For the Church, like a tender mother, compassionates the wants of her children, and does not wish to lay upon them a yoke or burden which they are unable to bear. She remembers the words of our B. Redeemer, that God desireth mercy rather than sacrifice, and, again, that other saying of his, "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

#### NICANOR AND THE JEWS.

During the struggle which ensued between Judas Machabeus and the generals of Antiochus, it happened that Nicanor, one of the latter, was on the point of attacking Judas with an overwhelming army on the Sabbath-day. The Jews, whom he had forced to serve among his troops, begged of him to respect the Sabbath, and defer the attack till the morrow. Nicanor, in a mocking tone, asked them if he who had commanded the Sabbath to be kept was a God of great power, and, on receiving an answer in the affirmative, blasphemously replied, that as he himself was mighty upon earth, they must obey him and not God. But God avenged himself on the blasphemer ; for, in the engagement which followed, the troops of Nicanor were defeated with great slaughter, and the General himself was numbered with the slain (2 Mach. xv.)

## THE AVARICIOUS MILLER.

A certain miller who dwelt in a town in France, was in the habit, in order to increase his gains, of pursuing his trade upon every Sunday and festival. While all the villagers were attending the High Mass at the parish church, he might be seen at his mill, employed in his usual avocations, and his irreligious conduct had become notorious in the neighbourhood. One day he went out as usual to his work, but, seeing the people pass by on their way to church, hid himself behind the sails of his mill, which were at that time stationary through want of wind. He had not been there long before a breeze sprang up, and the sails, being suddenly put in motion, caught his body and flung him into the air. Alarmed at his prolonged absence, his wife, after some hours, came to seek him, and found his lifeless body extended on the ground. It presented a fearful spectacle, being pierced in many places with the sharp points of the mill sails, and bruised and shattered with the violence of his fall.—*Instructions of Youth.*

## THE AVALANCHE.

In a small village situated on the slopes of the Alps there lived a man, who was notorious for his open and scandalous profanation of the Sunday. So far from attending Divine service in his parish church, it was his custom, as soon as the Sunday dawned, to set out with some companions, whom he had misled by his evil example, to hunt the chamois on the mountain side. In vain did his parish priest endeavour, by every means that zeal and charity could suggest, to reclaim him from so unbecoming a practice. It was all to no purpose, and at length seeing that the miserable man continued obstinate in his wickedness, the zealous pastor threatened him with the anger of God in case he did not desist from scandalising the neighbourhood by his public impiety.

Shortly after he set out as usual for the chase one Sunday morning, accompanied by two comrades. A heavy fall of snow had taken place during the night, but this gave the party little concern, as it served to render the traces of the game more visible, and to increase their prospect of a good day's sport. They had not proceeded far, when the two companions of the unhappy man, who were following in his track, perceived to their horror that, wherever he trod, his footsteps were marked with blood. Unable to account for the strange occurrence, and struck with a secret fear of the impending judgment of God, they both united in imploring him to discontinue the expedition for that day at least, informing him of what they had witnessed. He refused, however, telling them, with a laugh, that the blood on his track was an omen of a good day's sport. Whatever may have been the cause of this extraordinary occurrence—whether it proceeded from a natural cause, or was permitted by God as a mysterious warning—it exercised a whole-



some influence over his companions, who, touched by Divine grace, began to retrace their steps. They had not proceeded far when they heard a noise as it were of thunder behind their backs, and looking hastily round beheld the profaner of the Sabbath carried away by an avalanche, which came rolling down the side of the mountain. They ran with all speed to the village for assistance, and the inhabitants flocked out to search for the unhappy man. It was not, however, till some days after, that his body was discovered in a neighbouring ravine, buried many feet beneath the surface of the snow.\*

**Q.** Why are we commanded to rest from servile works ?

**A.** We are commanded to rest from servile works that we may have time and opportunity for prayer, for going to the Sacraments, hearing instructions, and reading good books.

From this answer you see that Almighty God, in ordering us to abstain from bodily labour upon Sunday, does not intend us to spend that day in idleness or pleasure. If we are commanded to rest from servile work, it is in order *that we may have that time and opportunity*, which we could not well secure on other days of the week, *for prayer, going to the Sacraments, hearing instructions, and reading good books*, in other words, for the service and worship of God. For Sunday is, as you know, *the Lord's day*, a day which he has especially reserved for himself, "the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." Let us now consider what those works of piety are, to which Sunday should be principally devoted.

In the first place, the catechism teaches us that Sunday should be especially a day of *prayer*. It is by prayer, my dear children, that we converse with God, acknowledge him for our Lord and Sovereign Master, thank him for his past blessings, implore his pardon for our offences, and beg of him all those graces which we stand in need of both for soul and body. No exercise can, therefore, be more suitable for Sunday than that of prayer. The most perfect form of prayer is, as I have told you, the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which we are bound to assist at under pain of mortal sin ; but a good Catholic will not be

\* This occurrence was related to the writer by the curé of a small village, situated in the neighbourhood of that where the catastrophe had taken place.

content on Sunday with hearing Mass; he will also be present at the other services of the Church, namely, the afternoon or evening prayers and Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament. The beautiful service of Benediction is, indeed, after the Mass, one of the most excellent of all devotions, for in it we gather together at the feet of our Blessed Lord, present upon the altar, to lay before him our sorrows, our trials, and our wants, to enjoy the sweetness of his presence, and receive his loving blessing. Never, if you can help it, be absent from Benediction; to assist at it devoutly brings peace and joy to the soul, and is the source of the choicest graces. Those, however, who, through distance from chapel or other causes, are unable to attend the afternoon or evening service, will do well to supply for it, as far as possible, by reciting at home the rosary or other prayers.

In the second place, we learn from the catechism that we cannot better sanctify the Sunday than by approaching to *the holy Sacraments*. For it is by Confession and the Holy Communion that our souls become purified from sin and united to God, nor can we keep the Lord's day in a manner more befitting, than by inviting the Lord himself into our souls, and entertaining him there by a devout Communion. Oh, how sweet and happy are those Sundays which we consecrate to God by approaching worthily to the Holy Sacraments! To such days may the words of the Psalmist be well applied, "Better is one day in thy courts, O Lord, above a thousand." May *you*, my dear children, who have made your first Communion, often enjoy this happiness. Nourished frequently with the Bread of Life, you will grow strong in the grace and love of God, you will learn to despise the world and its vanities, to fix your thoughts and affections on heaven, and to keep yourselves pure and innocent in the midst of a wicked world. And do *you* who have not yet received our B. Lord, beg of him earnestly, whenever you assist at Mass, to come at least spiritually into your hearts, and to prepare them by his grace for that loving visit which he is about to pay you on the great day of your first Communion.

The third means of sanctifying Sunday is attendance at

*religious instruction.* I have already told you, in explaining the first commandment, that it is the duty of every Christian to be instructed as fully as possible in the truths of religion. Now, there is no day more suitable for the fulfilment of this duty than Sunday, when our minds, being no longer distracted by worldly occupations, are better able to fix themselves on the things of God. The Church has wisely provided for this want by the establishment of Sunday schools and the public Catechism, which it is the duty of every Catholic child to attend. Neither are grown-up persons excused from the duty of obtaining religious instruction. The sermon at the late Mass, and the discourse at the evening Benediction, are the principal means afforded to them of fulfilling this obligation. Hence those Catholics who content themselves with hearing an early Mass upon Sunday, and, through sloth or indifference, attend no other service, cannot, generally speaking, be excused from sin on account of their wilful neglect of religious instruction.

I may here remark, my dear children, that there are some young people who, when they have been admitted to their first Communion, think that they have no longer any occasion to attend the Sunday school, or assist at Catechism. They forget that the truths of religion cannot be too deeply impressed upon our minds. Moreover, there is always something fresh to be learned about Almighty God, and the more we know of him the better shall we love him, and the more faithfully shall we fulfil our duty to him. Follow, therefore, in this the wishes of your parents and the advice of your pastor. And when at length you have grown up and completed your instruction, many of you will, I trust, be able to show your gratitude and love to God by helping in the work of the Sunday school, and by instructing those who are ignorant of the truths of religion. How happy will you be if you are able to assist in teaching others how to know and love our Good God; and how great and glorious will be your reward hereafter, according to the words of the prophet Daniel, "They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity" (Dan. xii. 3).

In the last place, we are taught to make the reading of *good books* one of the chief exercises by which to sanctify the Sunday. For there is hardly anything that is likely to make a deeper impression on our hearts, or lead us more powerfully to the love and service of God, than the attentive perusal of works of piety—such, for example, as those in which the life of our B. Lord or of his Saints is set before us for our imitation, or in which we are taught to meditate on the truths of eternity, or are instructed in the doctrines of our faith. I would earnestly advise you all to provide yourselves by degrees with a small library of good religious books. Among others, I would recommend the New Testament, the History of the Bible, that excellent little work the Think Well On't, the Poor Man's Catechism, and the Sufferings of Jesus, by St. Alphonsus Liguori. To these might be added a few volumes of the Lives of the Saints, and some book of devotion to our B. Lady. These excellent works are not like the silly tales and magazines of the day, the greater part of which do nothing but fill the mind with idle and dangerous thoughts, and are only read to be thrown aside; they are full of spiritual wisdom and useful instruction, and every time they are read, bring fresh profit to the soul. It is impossible for any one to go far astray who is fond of reading religious books, for the good instructions they contain will powerfully serve to restrain him from sin, and keep him in the path of virtue. There are many Saints now in heaven who owe to the reading of some Saint's Life, or other religious book which Providence threw in their way, their conversion from a sinful and worldly life to one of penance and heroic virtue. Of this you will see an example in the history of St. Ignatius Loyola.

#### CONVERSION OF ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA.

The great St. Ignatius, founder of the Society of Jesus, was born of a noble family, and followed in his youth the profession of arms in the service of the king of Spain. The character of Ignatius was open, generous, and courageous; he was, however, vain of his personal appearance, fond of pleasure, and full of worldly and ambitious thoughts. He ardently longed to distinguish himself in the service of his king, and to gain for himself the esteem and applause of the

world. An opportunity soon occurred to put his courage to the test. The city of Pampeluna was besieged by the French army, and, owing to the death of his superior officer, it fell to the lot of Ignatius to direct the defence. On this occasion he gave proof of great and noble qualities. Though at the head of but a small force, he scorned every proposal to surrender, encouraged the drooping spirits of the soldiers, and led them in person to attack the besiegers. In the engagement he was wounded by a cannon ball, which shattered his leg, and he was carried back helpless to the fortress.

After the surrender of the city Ignatius was permitted to retire to his own home, the Castle of Loyola, where he remained for many months helpless and confined to his bed. To while away the time, he desired his attendants to bring him some romances or tales of chivalry, but they could find no such books in the castle. They brought him, however, a volume of the Lives of the Saints, which they had met with in their search. Ignatius at first laid it impatiently aside, as ill suited to his taste; but seeing that no other book could be procured, he at length opened and began to read it. By degrees his attention became awakened, and he could not help admiring the noble generosity of men who had sacrificed fortune, worldly honour, and even life itself in the service of God. He soon began to compare their lives with his own, to reflect on the emptiness and vanity of all that passes with time, and to understand how wisely the Saints had acted in preferring the service of the King of Heaven to that of an earthly monarch. From that time Ignatius resolved to occupy himself no longer with the vain pursuit of earthly glory, but to devote himself to the great work of obtaining the victory over his own passions and promoting the glory of his Heavenly Master. Accordingly upon his recovery he retired into solitude, where he gave himself up to the practice of penance and prayer. Soon after he laid the foundation of the illustrious order of the Jesuits, the members of which, by the great works which they have performed for the education of youth and the preaching of the Gospel, have so well fulfilled those words which St. Ignatius took as the rule and motto of his life, "*Ad majorem Dei Gloriam—All to the greater Glory of God.*"—*Life of St. Ignatius.*

#### ST. AUGUSTINE'S EXPERIENCE OF THE USE OF GOOD BOOKS.

A certain courtier, a friend of St. Augustine, was one day walking near the city of Triers with three of his gay companions, when two of them, who were officers in the Emperor's army, chanced to enter a cottage which was the dwelling-place of some devout servants of God. Here they perceived upon the table a copy of the life of the great St. Anthony the hermit, which one of them opened through curiosity. Attracted, says St. Augustine, by something which caught his eye, he began to read, and reading, to admire, and admiring, to burn with the desire of imitating so noble and heroic an example. At length inflamed with what he read, and burning with

a holy zeal, he cried out to his companion, "Tell me, I pray, with all the pains we take, what does our ambition aspire to? Have we any greater hopes at court than to arrive at the friendship and favour of the Emperor? And when this is obtained, how long will it last? But behold, if I please, I can become this moment the friend and favourite of God, and remain so for ever." So saying, he paused; but having read a little further, he again exclaimed, "Behold, now I bid adieu to former hopes, and am fully resolved to have no other pursuit but that of serving God. I begin from this very hour, in this very place. As for you, if you do not imitate my example, at least do not hinder my resolution." The other replied that, so far from hindering him, he wished to stand by his side in so noble a warfare. Accordingly, taking leave of their companions, they remained in the cottage; upon receiving news of which, the two young ladies to whom they were engaged, consecrated their virginity to God.

This example, which was related to St. Augustine by his friend Pontitianus, at a time when his mind was still wavering between the force of truth and the violence of his passions, raised immediately a mighty conflict within his breast. Agitated by his feelings, and drawn by the grace of God, he retired into the garden to pray. Here he poured forth the anguish of his heart with bitter sighs and tears, when suddenly he heard the voice of a child frequently repeating these words, "*Tolle lege; tolle lege*;—take and read; take and read." Upon this, rising up in amazement, he went to fetch the book of St. Paul's Epistles, which he had left hard by, and opening it, he lighted upon the words, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh and its concupiscences." He read no further, nor had he need; for at the end of these lines a new gleam of confidence and security streamed into his heart, and all the darkness of his former hesitation was dispelled. He immediately went in and told the good news to his mother, St. Monica, who was transported with joy. He then put himself under the care of St. Ambrose, who shortly after conferred upon him the sacrament of Baptism.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

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## TWENTY-EIGHTH INSTRUCTION.

*The Fourth Commandment—What it commands—Duties of Children to their Parents—namely, Love, Honour, and Obedience—The Duties we owe to our Pastors, Rulers, Teachers, and Employers—Obligation of contributing to the support of our Pastors.*

Q. What is the Fourth Commandment?

A. The Fourth Commandment is, "Honour thy father and thy mother."

We have now gone through the first three commandments, which teach us our duty to Almighty God, and we come to speak of the remainder, which instruct us in our obligations to our fellow-men. These seven remaining commandments show us how to fulfil the second precept of charity, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," just as the three which you have learnt teach us how to keep the first precept, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart." The commandments which we are coming to are, however, closely connected with those that have gone before, for it is by loving our neighbour that we prove the reality of our love to God. Whence the Apostle St. John says, "He that loveth not his brother whom he seeth, how can he love God whom he seeth not?" (John iv. 20).

Among those whom we are bound by the law of charity to love, our parents certainly hold the first place, since it is to them under God that we are indebted for our birth, our support in infancy and childhood, our education, and many other blessings. Hence Almighty God has placed the duty, which we owe to our parents, foremost among all our obligations to our fellow-men, and, after instructing us in the first three commandments, as to what immediately regards his own Divine service, he goes on, in the fourth, to teach us what is due to our earthly parents, "*Honour thy Father and thy mother*, that thou mayest live a long time, and it may be well with thee in the land which the Lord thy God will give thee" (Deut. v. 16).

You will notice that to this commandment alone, among all the rest, Almighty God has added a special promise to those who faithfully observe it, namely, the promise of a long life and every happiness. It is true that the keeping of the other commandments will not pass unrewarded both in this life and in the world to come; but it would seem as if God, by making known to us the special blessings which attend the observance of this commandment, desired to impress upon us the particular importance of the duties which it enjoins, and to urge us most powerfully to fulfil them. Remember, then, my dear children, that if you love, honour, and obey your parents, Almighty God

has promised you, on his own Divine Word, a long and a happy life. Disobedient and undutiful children are often, by a just judgment, cut off in the flower of their youth, and, if spared for a time by the Mercy of God, who waits for their repentance, their days are usually full of evil, that is, of trouble and affliction. On the contrary, good and docile children enjoy during this life the special blessing and protection of God; and if, in his all-seeing Providence, he sometimes takes them to himself while yet young and innocent, it is only in order that they may not lose the purity of their souls by sin, that *it may be well with them* in the next life, and that *they may live a long time*, nay, for all eternity, *in the land which he will give them*, namely, amid the joys and delights of his heavenly kingdom.

Q. What are we commanded by the Fourth Commandment?

A. By the Fourth Commandment we are commanded to love, reverence, and obey our parents in all that is not sin.

Q. Are we bound to assist our parents in their wants?

A. Yes, certainly; we are bound to assist our parents in their wants, both spiritual and temporal.

We come now to speak of the different duties which we are commanded by this commandment to practise, and the manner in which we must discharge them. First of all, the catechism explains the duties which children, and those under authority, owe to their parents and superiors, and it then goes on to treat of the obligations of parents and superiors towards those whom God has placed under their charge.

The catechism tells us that we are bound to *love, reverence, and obey our parents in all that is not sin*. Here, you see, are mentioned three distinct duties which children owe to their parents, namely, *love, respect, and obedience*. These duties are, indeed, so clearly taught us by reason and the voice of our conscience that even the very pagans, who did not know God, both acknowledged and to a great extent fulfilled them. If you read the history of Greece or of Rome, you will there find related instances of filial reverence and love, which are sufficient to make the children of many Christian parents blush for their undutiful



conduct ; and even at the present time, among the Chinese and other infidel nations, the veneration and tender affection which are exhibited by children towards their parents, frequently fill the traveller with surprise and admiration.

The first duty which we owe to our parents, namely, to *love* them, is, as I have said, a sentiment natural to the human heart. There is, indeed, no feeling so deeply implanted in the breast of man as the natural affection which a child bears to those who have given him birth ; that child is justly regarded as a deformity, a monster of nature, who does not love his parents. By this commandment, however, we are taught that we must not love our parents with a mere human affection, like that with which the children of infidels and pagans love those who have brought them into the world, but we must love them because God so wills it, and because they hold in our regard the place of God. Our earthly father should be to us the image of our Heavenly Father, and we should look upon our mother as chosen to nurse and cherish us by Him who loves us with infinitely more than a mother's love, and who, as he himself tells us, though a mother were to forget the child of her womb, still will not be unmindful of us Isa. (xlix. 15). Moreover, the love which we bear them must not be a mere sentiment or feeling of the heart, it must be shown also by our outward conduct. Never must we sadden them by any unkind word or undutiful behaviour ; on the contrary, we must give them every mark and token of our affection. Remember that the feelings of parents towards their children are very tender, and that coldness, neglect, or unkindness touches them to the quick. Prove to them, then, both by word and deed, that you truly love them, doing your best to promote their happiness, and being ever ready, as in duty bound, *to assist them in their wants* both of soul and body. Thus, if they are in sorrow, it is your duty to console them ; if they are sick, to nurse and wait upon them ; if in trouble or in want, to help and relieve them ; and when unable to do this, you should at least lighten, as far as possible, the trials which God sends them, by your affectionate and dutiful conduct. When

your parents grow old and infirm, you should never, if possible, allow them to be dependent on the care and charity of strangers, or to be deprived, in their declining years, of the comforts of a home. You should deem it a pride and a glory, as well as a debt of gratitude which you owe them, to work for their support, to bear with their faults and infirmities, and to tend them with the same loving care which they lavished upon you in your infancy and childhood. If they fall into any serious illness, you should redouble your care and attention, warn them of their danger, and procure for them the helps and consolations of religion. Even after death your love should still follow them, you should mourn over their loss, and do all in your power to assist them by your prayers and Communion, and by the Masses which you should procure for the repose of their souls. Oh, my dear children, how happy will you be if you give these proofs of filial affection to your father and mother; the love which you show them will be to you the source of the purest happiness, and will draw down upon you the most abundant blessings of heaven.

We must not, however, be content with *loving* our parents, we must also *reverence* them. The importance of this duty is shown by the very words which God made use of in giving us the fourth commandment, "*Honour thy father and thy mother,*" that is, render to them every mark of respect and reverence. This, indeed, is due to them from the very fact that they hold, in our regard, the place of God; God has committed us to their care, and appointed them our guardians and protectors. In honouring them, therefore, we honour God; but if we are guilty of treating them with disrespect, we outrage God himself, and are sure to draw upon ourselves his severest punishments. Hence it is that he says in the Holy Scripture, "Cursed be he that honoureth not his father and mother" (Deut. xxviii. 16). But, on the other hand, "He that honoureth his mother is as one that layeth up a treasure. He that honoureth his father shall have joy in his own children, and in the day of his prayer he shall be heard. He that honoureth his father shall enjoy a long

life " (Ecclus. iii. 5-7). Like the love which we owe to our parents, the reverence which is due to them is both interior and exterior, that is, we must both honour them in our hearts, and show that honour by our outward conduct. We honour them in our hearts when we think of them with reverence, are blind to their failings, and judge favourably of their actions ; we honour them in our conduct when we show them any mark of outward respect, for example, when we stand up in their presence or kneel to ask their blessing ; we should also always speak to them in a respectful manner, listen attentively to what they say, and never presume to contradict or argue against them. If they are guilty of faults, we should do our best to conceal them from the eyes of others ; if their character is attacked, we should be eager to defend them, for we should consider their honour as our own, and never should we be so undutiful as to pass any remark which could lower them in the opinion of any one. Finally, we should ever remember that, whatever their conduct or faults may be, they are still our parents ; they still hold the place of God in our regard, and are therefore always entitled to be treated by us with reverence. I may add, that if our parents are advanced in years, their gray hairs give them an additional claim to our attention and respect ; for God himself teaches us that the aged are always to be treated with reverence, " Rise up," he says, " before the hoary head, and honour the person of the aged man " (Levit. xix. 32).

*Obedience* to our parents is a duty which is a necessary consequence of the love and honour which we owe them, for how can we truly love them if we do what displeases them, or honour them, if we resist their authority ? We are therefore bound by this commandment to submit our will to theirs, and to perform cheerfully, readily, and exactly whatever they command us. This, indeed, is just and reasonable, since we are by nature dependent upon them, and are indebted to them, under God, for our very existence and many other blessings. Moreover, while we are yet young, we are not able to judge for ourselves what is really for our good ; our parents, from their greater age

and experience, are far better able to direct us as to what is both for our temporal and spiritual advantage. But the principal reason why we must obey our parents is, because such is the Will of God, who has expressly commanded it. He has given us our parents to be the guides and directors of our life, especially of our infancy and early youth. He has invested them with his own authority; he has taught us by his holy Word and by his own Divine example upon earth to submit our will to theirs in all that is not contrary to the Law of God. Wherefore he says to us, by the mouth of the Apostle, "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord" (Col. iii. 20). From which words you see that the obedience which we are bound to render to our parents is not only just and reasonable, but that it is also commanded by God, and is most pleasing to his Divine Majesty. Let us now consider how we are to practise this important duty.

Remember, then, my dear children, that the perfect obedience which you owe to your parents consists in two things—namely, in doing promptly, exactly, and cheerfully what they command, and in faithfully refraining from what they forbid. No sooner have they spoken, than you should fly to execute their orders, showing by your cheerful and ready obedience that to do what they tell you is a work of love as well as of duty. Never should you seek to know the why or the wherefore of their commands, much less should you murmur or grumble at what they enjoin, or show, by sulky or gloomy looks, that their orders are displeasing or distasteful to you. A good child will even anticipate the commands of his parents, doing what he knows they desire, before they have time to tell him. In all things he will consult their wishes, and be guided by their advice; for example, with regard to the choice of his companions, the employment of his time, &c. Even when he grows older, he will not fail to ask their advice in all matters of importance, and to follow it as far as is possible. In one case only should we refuse to obey our parents, and that is, if they order us to do what is sinful, for the obedience which we owe

to God is above that which we owe to our parents ; hence the catechism says that we must obey them only *in all that is not sin*. For example, if our parents were to command us to steal or tell lies, we must certainly disobey them, for these things are clearly contrary to the Law of God. If, however, we merely *doubted* whether the commands of our parents were lawful or not, we should still obey them, for *they* have to answer to God for what they command us ; but *we*, unless we know that their orders are sinful, have to answer only for our obedience.

#### EXAMPLE OF OUR BLESSED REDEEMER

Our Divine Lord, who came down from heaven not only to die for our salvation, but also to teach us by his own example the way to heaven, has left us in his own person a perfect model of the fulfilment of the different duties which we owe to our parents. He loved his B. Mother and her holy spouse St. Joseph with a tender and devoted affection, honoured them as his earthly guardians, holding towards him on earth the place of his heavenly Father, and was ever obedient to their slightest wish. Behold him as a little infant at Bethlehem in the arms of his mother, submissive to her in all things, though the Lord of all, possessed of all wisdom and power. See him as a child in the cottage of Nazareth, helping his foster-father at his laborious trade of a carpenter, or assisting his mother in the various duties of her little household. At the age of twelve he went up to Jerusalem for the solemn feast of the Pasch, and, after the days of the festival were ended, remained teaching in the temple, thus entering on the great work which brought him down from heaven, the instruction and conversion of mankind. Mary and Joseph meanwhile sought him sorrowing, and at length, after three days, found him in the midst of the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions. At their first word he immediately quitted the work in which he was engaged, and returned with them to Nazareth ; for, though employed about his Heavenly Father's business, he knew that the will of his earthly parents *was* the will of his Father in heaven. Of his life from the age of twelve to that of thirty the Holy Scripture tells us but one thing, namely, that he remained subject to Mary and Joseph, a striking lesson for those children who, when they arrive at the age of youth, are only too eager to throw off the control and authority of their parents. Having entered upon his public preaching, our Lord's first miracle, the changing of water into wine at the marriage feast of Cana, was wrought at the request of his Mother ; for though, as he said himself, his hour for working miracles was not yet come, he could not refuse to grant *her* desire, expressed in these simple words—"Son, they have no wine." Finally, behold him stretched on the cross at

**Calvary**, suffering the most cruel agony, yet grieving not for himself, but over the anguish and desolation of his beloved Mother, whom he recommends with his dying words to the care of his favourite disciple St. John.

Oh, my dear children, if ever you are tempted to disobey your parents, or to show them any slight or disrespect, think of our dear Lord, and how He, who is the Great God of Heaven, became for our sakes subject and obedient to his own creatures.

We have another beautiful example in Scripture of the exact fulfilment of the threefold duty of the fourth commandment in the person of the holy Patriarch Joseph.

#### JOSEPH THE MODEL OF A GOOD SON

When Joseph was yet a child, his affectionate attention to his aged father, and his ready obedience to his slightest word, merited for him the special love and favour of Jacob, who, as the Scripture says, "loved Joseph above all his children." The favour of his father aroused, however, the jealousy of his brethren, who sought and plotted his ruin.

On one occasion when his brethren were absent from home in charge of their flocks, Jacob, wishing to hear news of them, called Joseph and said to him, "Behold, thy brethren feed their sheep in Sichem. Come, I will send thee to them." With a cheerful countenance Joseph made answer, "I am ready," and immediately he set out in search of them.

Sold by his cruel brethren as a slave, and carried into Egypt, Joseph never forgot his aged father amid the dignities and honours to which God raised him. His only desire was again to embrace him, to share his good fortune with him, and to be the prop and support of his declining years. When he made himself known to his brethren, who came to Egypt during the famine to buy corn, his first thought and inquiry was for his father. "I am Joseph," said he. "Is my father living? Make haste and go up to my father and tell him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, *God hath made me lord of the whole land of Egypt. Come down to me: linger not. And thou shalt dwell in the land of Gessen, and thou shalt be near me; and there will I feed thee!* And when he was come thither, Joseph went up to meet his father, and seeing him, he fell upon his neck, and embracing him, wept."

Though Joseph was raised to so high a post of honour in Egypt, being made governor of that country and second in rank to the king himself, he was not ashamed of the humble occupation which his father followed, namely, that of a shepherd, which was considered by the Egyptians as a mean and servile employment; "for the Egyptians have all shepherds in abomination." On the con-

trary, he took a noble and filial pride in introducing his father to the king, and begged that he would give him a portion of the country to dwell in, that would be favourable for his usual pursuits. And "Joseph," says the holy Scripture, "brought in his father to the king and presented him before him. And Joseph gave a possession to his father and brethren in the best place of the land, as Pharaoh had commanded. And he nourished them and all his father's house, allowing food to every one."

The days of the patriarch Jacob were now drawing to a close, but his dying moments were soothed by the tender care of his devoted son, who was eager to render the last duties of filial affection to his beloved father. No sooner had Joseph heard that he was sick, than he hurried to his bedside, taking with him his two sons, Manasses and Ephraim, whom he presented to his father to receive his dying blessing. He remained with him to the last, and when he saw that he was dead, "he fell upon his father's face, weeping and kissing him. And he commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. And Egypt mourned for him seventy days."

A short time after, Joseph fulfilled his father's dying wishes by going up from Egypt with a long train of attendants to the land of Chanaan to bury his body in the double cave of Mambre, where the bodies of Abraham and Isaac were already laid.—*Genesis*.

#### THE SON OF CRÆSUS.

Cyrus the Great, during his war with Cræsus, king of Lydia, laid siege to the city of Sardis, and soon succeeded in carrying it by assault. A body of his soldiers, eager to distinguish themselves by the capture of the king, rushed to the palace of Cræsus, who soon fell into their hands. As, however, he was in disguise, they failed to recognise him. Enraged at their disappointment, one of their number was about to plunge his sword into the breast of their captive, when Atys, son of Cræsus, who had been dumb from his birth, perceiving his father's danger ran to the spot, and bursting by a mighty effort the bonds which nature had imposed upon him, cried out, "Hold thy hand, barbarian, it is the king my father!"—*Rollin's Ancient History*.

#### FILIAL CONDUCT OF SIR THOMAS MORE.

The great Sir Thomas More, Lord High Chancellor of England, was remarkable during his youth for his affectionate and dutiful conduct towards his parents. When he had grown up to manhood, and had been raised to the highest dignities of the State by King Henry VIII., he continued to display the same deference and respect towards his aged father, of which he had been so admirable a model when a boy. It is related of him that each morning before taking his seat in the Chancellor's Court, he was wont to repair, clad in

his robes of office, to the Court of Queen's Bench. There his father, who was then far advanced in years, sat as one of the inferior judges ; but though superior both in rank and office, the Lord High Chancellor of England was seen each day to come and kneel at the old man's feet to ask his blessing. So admirable an exercise of humility and filial piety drew upon him the choicest blessings of heaven. When Henry soon after threw off his obedience to the Holy See, and impiously declared himself head of the Church in England, Sir Thomas More firmly resisted every effort which the king made to draw him into his schism, and by his fidelity to the faith merited the glorious crown of martyrdom.—*Life of Sir Thomas More.*

Q. Are we commanded to obey our parents only ?

A. We are commanded to obey, not only our parents, but also our bishops and pastors, the civil authorities, and our lawful superiors.

By the fourth commandment we are commanded to obey not only our parents, but also *our Bishops and pastors, the civil authorities* (that is, the rulers of the state), and, in a word, all *our lawful superiors*. For all of these are placed over us by God, and the authority which they exercise is the authority of God himself. Hence St. Paul says, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, for there is no power but from God, and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation" (Rom. xiii. 1, 2).

In the first place, we must obey our spiritual superiors, namely, our Bishops, and also our pastors ; that is to say, those Priests who have the special charge of our souls. For our Bishop is appointed by the Pope, who is the Vicar of Christ and the Universal Bishop of the Church, to rule and govern the diocese to which we belong, and we are bound, therefore, to reverence and obey him as the shepherd of our souls. We owe a like duty to the Priest, who is sent by the Bishop to administer the Sacraments to us, to teach us the truths of our faith, and to guide us on our path to eternal life. The Priest is, indeed, our spiritual father, for it is through *him* that we receive our spiritual birth in the Sacrament of Baptism. Moreover, it is *he* who feeds us with the Bread of Life in the Holy Communion, who teaches us how to walk on the way to heaven by his sermons and instructions, who heals the wounds of



our souls in the Sacrament of Penance, who comforts us in our sorrows, counsels us in our doubts, encourages us in our trials and temptations, and, finally, who visits us on our sick bed and soothes our last moments with the consolations of religion. Hence we are bound to love the Priest as our spiritual father, to honour him as God's minister, and to obey him as the guide and shepherd of our souls. We should always speak of him with reverence, salute him respectfully, and be guided in what regards our souls by his instructions and advice. Never should we forget that in obeying him, we obey Jesus Christ, and in honouring him, we show honour to our Lord himself, according to his own words, "He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me" (Luke x. 16).

There is a beautiful example related in the Scriptures of the respect and obedience which we owe to our spiritual superiors. I mean the history of the holy prophet Samuel, who, when yet a child, was consecrated to God, and brought up in the temple under the care of the high priest Heli.

#### THE YOUNG SAMUEL.

"Now the child Samuel," says the Holy Scripture, "ministered to the Lord before Heli, and slept in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was.

"And the Lord called Samuel. And he answered, *Here I am*. And he ran to Heli and said, *Here I am, for thou didst call me*. He said, *I did not call thee; go back and sleep*. And he went and slept.

"And the Lord called Samuel again. And Samuel arose and went to Heli, and said, *Here I am, for thou calledst me*. He answered, *I did not call thee, my son; return and sleep*.

"And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose up and went to Heli, and said, *Here I am, for thou didst call me*. Then Heli understood that the Lord called the child, and he said to Samuel, *Go and sleep; and if He shall call thee any more, thou shalt say, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.'* So Samuel went and slept in his place.

"And the Lord came and stood, and he called as he had called the other times, *Samuel! Samuel!* And Samuel said, *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.*"

Then Almighty God revealed to Samuel the punishments which he had in store for the house of Heli, because the high priest had neglected to correct and chastise his children for their wicked and scandalous conduct. When morning came, Heli questioned Samuel

as to what the Lord had said. Samuel, out of respect to the high priest, was at first unwilling to tell him ; but at length, in obedience to his command, related all that God had revealed to him (1 Kings iii.)

But we must not obey only our spiritual superiors ; that is, our Bishops and pastors ; we owe also the same obedience to the *civil authority*, that is, to all those who rule and administer the laws of the State. Hence, we are bound to obey the Queen, who is the chief ruler of the country, her ministers, her parliament, as also the judges and officers appointed by her to preserve peace and administer the public laws. God has invested them with the authority they hold for the common good, for "there is no power," St. Paul says, "but from God, and those that are," that is, that possess authority, "are ordained of," or, in other words, receive their power from, "God" (Rom. xiii. 1). Therefore we should ever treat them with respect, and obey them exactly in all matters to which their authority extends, for the sake of God whose power they hold. Hence St. Peter says, "Be ye subject to every human creature for God's sake, whether it be to the king as excelling, or to rulers as sent by him" (1 Pet. ii. 13) ; and St. Paul expressly declares that those who resist the power resist the ordinance of God, and purchase to themselves damnation (Rom. xiii. 2).

From this it follows that we are bound to obey the laws of our country as long as those laws are not in opposition to the commandments of God. Thus we are bound to pay the taxes which are laid upon us by lawful authority for the expenses of government, the support of our armies, and the preservation of the public peace, and this not only from a motive of obedience, but also of justice, for it is just that those who share in the protection of the State should contribute to the expenses of the State. Hence, also, we are forbidden to resist the authority of the law, by rebelling against our established rulers, opposing the officers of justice, or joining in secret or illegal societies. And notice, it matters not whether the rulers of a State be good or bad, gentle or cruel, we are still bound to respect and obey them. And why so ? Because

the authority which they hold is the same, whatever their own conduct may be, and is worthy of reverence, since it comes from God, who will require from *them* an account of how they have ruled, but from *us* of how we have obeyed. Therefore St. Peter says that we must obey them *for God's sake*. We read in the history of the Church that the early Christians were grievously oppressed and cruelly persecuted by those monsters of cruelty and wickedness, the emperors of Rome; yet they faithfully observed the laws of their country, and shed their blood freely in its defence. Though so numerous, as Tertullian remarks, as to fill the towns, the cities, the camp, the Senate, and the Forum, they preferred to suffer patiently the most barbarous torments and death itself, rather than resist authority or rise in rebellion against their lawful rulers. In one thing only did they refuse to obey, and this at the cost of their lives—namely, in what was forbidden by the law of God. Witness the noble example of St. Maurice and his glorious band of martyrs.

#### THE THEBAN LEGION.

In the army of the Emperor Maximus was a company of six thousand Christians, who, from having been levied in the neighbourhood of Thebes, a city of Upper Egypt, were named the Theban Legion. Being about to commence a general persecution against the Church, the Emperor celebrated public games, accompanied with sacrifices to his false gods. At the same time he informed his troops that it was his intention to make use of them for the entire destruction of the Christian religion.

At that time his army was encamped on the banks of the lake of Geneva; but on receiving the Emperor's message, the Theban Legion, under the command of St. Maurice, withdrew to the foot of the mountain now known by the name of the Great St. Bernard. An order soon arrived from the Emperor that they should take part in the public sacrifices, under pain of being decimated; but they declared with one voice that they would never offer sacrifice to idols, or imbrue their hands in the blood of their fellow-Christians. The lots were cast, and every tenth soldier fell beneath the sword of the executioner. A second message from the Emperor met with no better success, and was succeeded by a fresh decimation. Being a third time summoned to comply with the Emperor's orders, St. Maurice, in the name of the rest, replied, "O Emperor, we are thy soldiers, but we are also the soldiers of Jesus Christ. From thee we receive our pay, but from him we receive eternal life. We are

ready to fight with thee against the barbarians, but are also ready to die rather than renounce our faith or fight against our brethren." Upon this noble confession of faith, the tyrant ordered the rest of the army to surround the devoted legion and involve them in a general massacre. The Christian soldiers flung away their arms, and, in imitation of their Divine Master, gave themselves up as sheep to the slaughter. Some were trampled down by the cavalry, some were hung on trees and shot with arrows, some were killed with the sword, and St. Maurice, with the other officers of the legion, was beheaded.—*Butler's Lives of the Saints.*

"RENDER TO CÆSAR THE THINGS THAT ARE CÆSAR'S."

"Then the Pharisees," says the Evangelist, "consulted among themselves how to ensnare Jesus in his speech. And they sent to him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, *Master, we know that thou art a true speaker and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man, for thou dost not regard the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what dost thou think: is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not?*

"But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said, *Why do ye tempt me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the coin of the tribute.* And they offered him a penny. And Jesus saith to them, *Whose image and inscription is this?* They say to him, *Cæsar's.* Then he saith to them, *Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.*

"And hearing this, they wondered, and, leaving him, went their ways" (Matt. xxii. 15-22).

Besides the obligation we are under of showing respect and obedience to the public rulers of the State, we are also bound to render the same duties to those who have authority over us in private life, either by the will of our parents, or in virtue of some contract or agreement which we have made with them. Thus children are bound to respect and obey the teachers to whom their parents have entrusted the care of their education. It is their duty to attend punctually at school at the appointed hours, to learn their lessons diligently, and to do their best that the money which their parents expend, and the labour which their teachers bestow on their education, may not be thrown away. They must also speak to their teachers with respect, submit cheerfully to their reproofs and corrections, listen attentively to their instructions, and be guided by their warnings and advice. In a word, they should look upon their teachers as holding the place of

their parents, as their parents hold the place of God in their regard. Never, my dear children, can we be sufficiently grateful to those who train our minds to knowledge and our hearts to the love of God, which is the office of a Christian teacher. While we are young we cannot properly understand the greatness of the service which they render us, but when we grow older we shall feel that they, like the husbandman of the Gospel (Matt. xiii. 3, &c.), have been sowing good seed in our hearts, which, if it has fallen on good soil, will produce in after years thirty, or sixty, or a hundredfold.

#### ST. ARSENIUS AND HIS PUPILS.

The holy abbot Arsenius, before he left the world and retired into the desert, led an innocent and saintly life at the court of Theodosius the Great, who had entrusted him with the care of the education of his children. This important office Arsenius discharged with the utmost zeal and fidelity, and the young princes profited no less by the example than by the instructions of their virtuous master.

It happened one day that the Emperor entered the room while the lessons were going on, and found Arsenius standing, while his pupils sat listening to his instructions. Theodosius hereupon reproved his sons as guilty of a want of proper respect to their master, and in punishment took from them for a time their marks of royal dignity. He then bade them rise from their seats, and invited Arsenius to be seated and continue his lesson, begging him to excuse the thoughtlessness of his sons, who had forgotten the respect which must always be paid, even by princes, to those who have the charge of their instruction.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

Finally, we must honour and obey those into whose employment we have entered as servants, workmen or apprentices. For our masters and mistresses are our lawful superiors, and the authority which they have over us comes from God himself. Hence we are bound to execute their lawful commands, to labour diligently in their service, and to speak to them and treat them always with respect. It is our duty also to be *faithful* and trustworthy in their regard, looking upon their interests as our own, guarding their property from injury, turning to the best account what they commit to us to be employed in their service, and never betraying their con-

fidence by exposing their faults or speaking of their private affairs. A servant who cheats his master, wastes his goods, allows others to rob him, or betrays his secret faults, is guilty of a sin of treachery as well as of injustice, since he abuses his master's confidence in order to injure him.

The Apostle St. Paul, in instructing his disciples on this subject, tells them that they should obey their earthly masters not through interest or fear, but for the love of God and because such is the Divine Will. He bids them look upon Jesus Christ in the person of their masters, and labour diligently in their service, since by so doing they are serving God and not men. "Servants," he says, "be obedient to them that are your lords according to the flesh—as to Christ, not serving to the eye, as it were pleasing men, but as the servants of Christ, doing the Will of God from the heart, with a good will serving, as to the Lord, and not to men" (Eph. vi. 5, 6). Oh! how diligently would servants labour, and how much merit would they gain, if they would profit by this beautiful instruction, and do all their work to please, not so much their earthly as their Heavenly Master! The remembrance that His all-seeing eye is ever upon them, and that even the least work done to please Him will not pass unrewarded, would be at the same time a powerful motive to incite them to industry and diligence, and also a sweet consolation in all the labours and trials to which their state and condition are subject.

Q. Are we bound in conscience and justice to contribute to the support of our Pastors?

A. Yes: it is just, and commanded by God, that we should contribute to the support of our Pastors; for St. Paul says, "The Lord hath ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel" (1 Cor. ix. 14).

In this answer the catechism teaches us that it is the strict duty of every Christian to contribute towards the support of his pastors, and this for two reasons—in the first place, because *justice requires it*, and secondly, because it is the Will of God, and *our B. Lord has expressly commanded it*.

In the first place, *it is just*. What, indeed, can be more just and reasonable than that the faithful, who receive so many spiritual blessings through the ministry of their priests, should contribute towards their temporal support? The priest is, as St. Paul calls him, "a man of God" (2 Tim. vi. 11), that is, one who devotes himself entirely to the service of God, and this principally by labouring for the salvation of his fellow-men. Hence, though living in the midst of the world, he is, as it were, separated from the world; he does not marry, he does not engage in any worldly business or pursuit, but gives himself up entirely to the worship of God and the care of his flock. He is occupied continually in praying for his people, offering for them the holy Mass, hearing their confessions, instructing them in their duties, administering to them the Sacraments, visiting and consoling them on the bed of sickness or death. He expends his time, his health, his strength, in the service of his people, often exposes himself to danger, and not unfrequently, like the Good Shepherd, lays down his life for his flock. Surely, then, nothing can be more just and reasonable than that the faithful under his charge should cheerfully and readily contribute towards his support.

In the second place, it is, to use the words of St. Paul, expressly *ordained*, or commanded by Christ, *that those who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel*, that is, should receive all that is necessary for their support from those to whom they preach. In another place, the same Apostle exhorts his disciples to fulfil faithfully this duty, which they owe to their pastors, "Let him," he says, "that is instructed in the word communicate to him that instructeth him in all good things" (Gal. vi. 6), that is, in the good things of this world. If you read the holy Gospel, you will find that our B. Lord did not himself disdain to be dependent, in a manner, for the necessities of life on those to whom he preached. Thus he abode with Martha and Mary, and also with Nicodemus, sat down to eat with Matthew and Simon the Pharisee, and was ministered to by the holy women who followed him during his public preaching. Hence, too, in sending his disciples to the

different cities of Israel to announce his coming, he bade them take with them neither purse nor scrip, that is, neither money nor provisions, but remain with those to whom they preached, eating and drinking what was set before them (Luke x.) In the Old Law it was commanded by God himself, that certain cities and lands should be set apart for the dwelling-place and maintenance of the priests and Levites (Jos. xxi.); they were, moreover, entitled, in virtue of their sacred office, to receive a portion of the sacrifices offered, and also the first-fruits and the tithes, which were a tenth part of the produce of the harvests and the flocks (Numb. xviii. ; Deut. xviii.) In former ages of the Church, when all were united in the one faith, a similar law respecting tithes generally prevailed ; money, also, and lands were left by pious benefactors for the support of the clergy. In this country, however, as in many others, the Church has been robbed of all her possessions and endowments by the sacrilegious hand of the spoiler, at the time of the so-called Reformation, and her clergy have been left dependent for their subsistence on the voluntary offerings of the faithful.

You will ask me, perhaps, in what manner Catholics can best fulfil the strict obligation which they are under of contributing towards the support of their pastors. They can do so in many ways ; for example, by the payment of entrance money at the church doors, by renting sittings or pews, and by making any private offering, or giving to any public collection for this object. They will also help greatly to relieve the burden which often presses heavily on the shoulders of their clergy if they give generously towards the expenses of the mission, the support of the schools, or the paying off of any debt which may remain on the Church. To these objects all are bound to contribute according to their means. If they are rich, they must give liberally, for they are but the stewards of that God who has given them their riches, and who will demand an account of the same ; but even if they are poor, they are not excused from giving something out of the little they possess towards the service of God and the



support of his ministers. From the example of the poor widow in the Gospel we see that the humble offerings of the poor are often more pleasing in the sight of God than the most valuable gifts of the rich,

#### THE WIDOW'S MITE.

"And Jesus," says the holy Gospel, "sitting over against the treasury, beheld how the people cast money into the treasury, and many that were rich cast in much.

"And there came a poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing.

And calling his disciples together, he saith to them, *Amen I say to you, this poor widow hath cast in more than all they that have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance, but she of her want cast in all she had, even her whole living*" (Mark xii. 41, &c.)

There is a beautiful history related in Scripture, of the hospitality shown by a poor widow woman to the prophet Elias, during the severe famine which afflicted the kingdom of Israel in the reign of the wicked King Achab. You will see from it how pleasing to God and how sure to draw down the Divine blessing are such acts of charity exercised towards his ministers. Indeed, the Almighty regards as done to himself what we do to those whom he sends in his Name, according to the words of our Lord, "He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me" (Matt. x. 40).

#### ELIAS AND THE WIDOW OF SAREPHTA.

"The word of the Lord," says the Holy Scripture, "came to Elias, saying, *Arise, and go to Sarephta of the Sidonians, and dwell there, for I have commanded a widow woman to feed thee.*

"He arose, and went to Sarephta. And when he was come to the gate of the city, he saw the widow woman gathering sticks; and he called her, and said to her, *Give me a little water in a vessel that I may drink.* And when she was going to fetch it, he called after her, saying, *Bring me also, I beseech thee, a morsel of bread in thy hand.* And she answered, *As the Lord God liveth, I have no bread, but only a handful of meal in a pot, and a little oil in a cruse. Behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die.* And Elias said to her, *Fear not, but go in and do as thou hast said, but first make for me of the same meal a little hearth cake, and bring it to me, and after that make for thee*

*and thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, 'The pot of meal shall not waste nor the cruse of oil be diminished until the day wherein the Lord will give rain upon the face of the earth.'* She went, and did according to the word of Elias, and he eat, and she and her house, and from that day the pot of meal wasted not, and the cruse of oil was not diminished, according to the word of the Lord.

"And it came to pass after this that the son of the woman fell sick, and the sickness was very grievous, so that there was no breath left in him. And she said to Elias, *What have I to do with thee, thou man of God? Art thou come to me, that my iniquities should be remembered, and that thou shouldst kill my son?* And Elias said to her, *Give me thy son.* And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him into the upper chamber where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried to the Lord and said, *O Lord my God, hast thou afflicted, alas, the widow with whom I am after a sort maintained, so as to kill her son?* And he stretched and measured himself upon the child three times, and cried to the Lord and said, *O Lord my God, let the soul of this child, I beseech thee, return into his body.* And the Lord heard the voice of Elias, and the soul of the child returned into him, and he revived. And Elias took the child and brought him down from the upper chamber to the house below, and delivered him to his mother" (3 Kings xvii.)

## TWENTY-NINTH INSTRUCTION.

*The Fourth Commandment concluded—Duties of Parents, first, as regards the bodies; secondly, as regards the souls of their children—Duties of masters and other superiors—What the Fourth Commandment forbids—Contempt, stubbornness, and disobedience—Secret Societies.*

Q. What is the duty of parents towards their children?

A. The duty of parents towards their children is to provide for them, to instruct and correct them, and to give them a good Catholic education.

In the last instruction I explained to you the duties which children and those who are under authority owe to their parents and superiors. To-day we come to speak of the obligations of parents, and of the duties, which those who are placed in authority over others owe to those under their charge.

There is nothing more to be desired, my dear children,

than that parents should clearly understand, and faithfully fulfil, the important duties which God has entrusted to them. It is the ignorance and neglect of parents which are the cause of the greater part of the evils that we see in the world, and of the eternal loss of innumerable souls. To parents God has committed a most precious charge, namely, the spiritual and temporal care of those little ones whom he has created to his own image, whom he loves with the tenderest love, and for whom he has shed his most Sacred Blood. And for what purpose has he confided to them these children whom he loves so dearly? That they may nourish and support them in their infancy and childhood, guard them from evil, whether of soul or body, and train them up in virtue and piety. Hence the catechism says that parents are bound *to provide for their children, to instruct and correct them, and to give them a good Catholic education.* At the day of judgment Almighty God will demand of parents a strict account of the manner in which they have fulfilled these important duties. If they have discharged them faithfully, their reward will be exceeding great; but if they have neglected them, their punishment will be most severe, for their children will bear witness against them, and God will regard those negligent parents as guilty of the spiritual murder of those whom they have brought into the world.

Let us now consider what are the special obligations of parents in regard to their children. It is useful that you should know them, for then you will understand better why it is that the conduct of your parents towards you sometimes appears strict and severe, and you will see how unreasonable and wrong it is for you to murmur at or disobey them, since they only do what they are strictly obliged to do, and do it, moreover, for your good.

The duties which parents owe to their children partly regard their *bodies*—in other words, their life and well-being here below; and partly relate to their *souls*—that is, to that eternal life for which God has created them. We will first speak of those duties which regard the temporal interests of their children.

In the first place, parents are bound to watch over the

safety and preservation of their children, to provide them with food and clothing, and supply their necessary wants as long as they are unable to take care of themselves, or to work for their own subsistence. The father must provide for their support by his labour and industry, the mother must nurse, feed, and clothe them, tend them in sickness, and guard them by continual watchfulness from those dangers and accidents to which children are often exposed. If the father, through his own neglect, leaves his family without the means of support, spending his time in idleness, or wasting and squandering his earnings at the public-house, he is guilty of mortal sin. If, on the other hand, the mother allows her children to run uncared-for in the streets, exposes them by her negligence to the danger of being scalded or burnt, while she is perhaps gadding about or gossiping with her neighbours, or, if she, through her own fault, leaves them in rags or without proper nourishment, she, also, is grievously guilty in the sight of God.

As children grow older, it becomes the duty of their parents to send them to school, or to provide them, in some other way, with such instruction as is suited to their position in life. Even the poorest should take care that their children are taught at least to read and write. Parents who neglect this duty, and allow their children to grow up in ignorance, or who fulfil it but partially, by sending them irregularly to school, and keeping them at home on the slightest pretexts, offend God, and do their children a serious injury, in depriving them of knowledge, which is of great importance for their future advancement in life. A good parent will always be most anxious to second the efforts of the teacher. He will take care that his children attend regularly, and at the appointed hours, also that they learn at home the tasks which are set them, and, finally, he will keep them at school until they have finished their education. How often it happens that children are taken away from school at a very early age for the sake of the trifling wages they are able to earn, and are thus deprived of instruction at the very time when they are most capable of profiting by

it. The loss which they suffer is one which will be deeply felt, but can hardly be supplied in later life.

Finally, parents are bound, as far as they are able, to provide their children when they grow older with the means of obtaining a livelihood, either by apprenticing them to a trade, or by procuring for them some suitable employment. In this they should look not to what will bring them the highest wages for the time, but to what will be of the most lasting advantage; they should, moreover, take care that the employment which they procure for their children is one which does not interfere with the practice of their religion, or expose them to any danger of sin.

We come now to speak of the obligations of parents in regard to the *souls* of their children. These obligations are of course far higher and more important than those which simply regard their temporal interests.

In the first place, parents are bound to see that their children are baptized soon after their birth, indeed, if possible, within the first few days. Without Baptism no one can enter heaven, since we are all born in sin, and nothing defiled can enjoy the sight of God. Those parents, therefore, who delay the Baptism of their children for any length of time without strict necessity, are guilty of grievous sin, because they expose their children to the danger of dying in a state of sin, and of being for ever excluded from the kingdom of heaven. Parents cannot be too particular on this point, for new-born infants are exposed to many dangers and sudden diseases; indeed a very large proportion of them die within the first few months of their existence.

In the second place, parents are bound to *instruct* their children in the great truths of religion and their daily prayers. As soon as their children are able to lisp, they should teach them to pronounce with reverence the holy names of Jesus and Mary, and to sign themselves with the sign of the cross. They should often speak to them of that good God who made them, who watches over them with the tenderest love, and who gives to them, by the hands of their parents, food, clothing, and all that is

necessary for their daily wants. They should try to inspire them with a lively horror of sin, and with the love of truth, purity, and every virtue. They should set before them the example of the child Jesus, who, though the great God of heaven, was obedient to his own creatures—Mary and Joseph. Parents are also bound to teach their children their prayers, and see that they say them regularly, morning and evening. As their children grow older, they must take care that they hear Mass upon Sundays and Holidays, also that they attend Sunday school and Catechism, in order that they may be instructed under the care of their priest, and prepared at the proper age for Confession and Holy Communion. Nor must parents think that they have done all that is necessary when their children have been admitted to their first Communion. They must do their utmost to help to preserve the grace of it in their hearts by keeping them at instruction, sending them regularly to their duties, and seeing that they are in due time prepared for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Oh, how happy are those children whose parents fully understand and faithfully discharge these important duties!

In the third place, parents are bound to *correct* their children when they do wrong, either by warning and re-proving, or, if necessary, by punishing them. Do not think that your parents are very good and kind if they never scold you for your faults, nor chastise you when you deserve it; on the contrary, they are your worst enemies, for, if your passions are not checked and your faults corrected when you are young, they will be the cause of much misery to you in this life, and, perhaps, of your eternal damnation. Hence the Holy Scripture says, "He that spareth the rod hateth his son, but he that loveth him correcteth him betimes" (Prov. xiii. 24). What, indeed, can be more injurious than the foolish indulgence of those weak parents, who give way to all the whims and fancies of their children, and can never bear to reprove or punish them? No wonder that their children grow up wayward, unruly, and stubborn, the cause of many a bitter hour and many a tear to their parents in after life, according

to the words of the wise man, "Bow down his neck while he is young, and beat his sides while he is a child, lest he grow stubborn and regard thee not, and so be a sorrow of heart to thee" (Ecclus. xxx. 12); and again, "The rod and the reproof give wisdom, but the child that is left to his own will bringeth his mother to shame" (Prov. xxix. 15). On the contrary, some parents err through over severity, or by punishing in anger or passion. Slight faults should be corrected with slight punishments, a look or a word of reproof will often be enough; but serious faults against the commandments of God should be punished more severely, only with prudence and temper, so that the child may see that the correction is not inflicted through passion or revenge, but through a true love for him and desire of his good.

The fourth duty which parents owe to their children is to watch over them, and guard them as far as possible from all danger of sin. The greatest danger to which children can be exposed is that of bad company; for nothing has more influence over the young than example, and innocent children are soon corrupted by wicked companions. Parents, therefore, are strictly bound to watch over their children in this respect, and to allow them to play with those only whose conduct they know to be innocent and virtuous. They should not permit their children without necessity to be out after dark except in their own company, and should keep them carefully from all sinful and dangerous amusements. Even at home they must continue to exercise a prudent watch over their conduct, in order that they may not be exposed to any danger of evil. If their children are able to read, they should never allow them to waste their time in perusing those foolish novels, journals, and romances, which only serve to weaken the mind and inflame the passions, but should provide them, as far as they are able, with books that are both innocent and instructive. Finally, they should never forget that our nature is corrupt through the sin of our first parents, and that, however good and innocent their children may appear, they are still prone to evil, and, as soon as they come to the use of reason, are exposed to the temptations

of the devil, who will leave nothing untried to rob them of the precious treasure of their innocence.

In the fifth place, parents are bound to set their children a good example ; for if, as I have said, the example of companions has so powerful an influence over the conduct of the young, how much greater influence has the example of their parents, to whom they look up as their teachers, and whom they are naturally inclined to imitate ? Oh ! how grievous in the sight of God is the conduct of those wicked parents who curse and swear, who get drunk, who quarrel and fight even in the presence of their children ; or who stay away from Mass, neglect the Sacraments, or break the days of fasting and abstinence, thereby destroying, by their own wicked example, the effect of all that their children may have learnt at school or catechism ! If, as our Blessed Lord says, he that scandalises any one of his little ones had better have been cast with a millstone about his neck into the depths of the sea, what will be the punishment of those wicked parents who, by their bad example, are the spiritual murderers of their own children ? A good parent, on the contrary, will teach his children, by his own example, to love virtue, and fulfil faithfully the duties of religion. His children will learn from him to be attentive to their prayers and their Sunday's Mass, regular in frequenting the Sacraments, truthful in word, upright in their dealings, masters of their own temper, tender of their neighbour's character, charitable to the poor ; in a word, faithful in the discharge of all their duties to God, their neighbour, and their own souls. Trained, when young, in the way in which they should walk, by the powerful influence of the example of their father and mother, they will not depart from the right way when they grow old, but will leave in turn to their children the same pattern of Christian virtue which they have received as a most precious inheritance from their own parents.

Finally, parents are bound to pray for their children, in order to draw upon them the blessing of God, for, as holy David says, " unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it, unless the Lord keep the city,



he watcheth in vain that keepeth it". (Ps. cxxvi. 1). We read in the Scriptures that Job offered sacrifices for his sons and his daughters, "lest, perhaps, they had sinned" (Job i. 5). So should parents pray constantly for the Divine blessing on their children, as well in their daily prayers, as also whenever they hear Mass or approach the Holy Communion. What they are not able to do by their words and advice, they may often succeed in effecting by their prayers, for God gives a special blessing to the petitions which parents offer in behalf of their children.

These, my dear children, are the principal duties of your parents in regard to your temporal and spiritual welfare. They are great and important duties, and they are often difficult and trying, but God will give your parents the necessary grace to discharge them faithfully, if they earnestly implore it. Do you, on your part, try to lighten their labour by your docility and obedience. Imitate the young Tobias in the respect with which he received the counsels of his aged father, and the fidelity with which he copied the example of his virtues. You will then grow up, as he did, the glory and consolation of your parents, and when you are parted from them by death it will only be to meet them again in another life, to add by your own happiness to the joy and splendour of their crown.

#### PUNISHMENT OF HELI.

The High Priest Heli had two sons, Ophni and Phinees, who, by their sinful lives, profaned their sacred office, and were the cause of grievous scandal to the people. In vain were complaints of their bad conduct made to their father; a weak and sinful indulgence prevented him from correcting these abuses and chastising the offenders. At length the Anger of God was aroused, and he announced to the holy child Samuel, who was then living in the temple under the care of Heli, the terrible judgment which was about to fall upon the High Priest and his family, *because he knew that his sons did evil and did not chastise them*. Heli, informed by Samuel of the approaching calamity, humbly resigned himself to the Will of the Almighty. "It is the Lord," said he, "let him do what is good in his sight."

Soon after, the Philistines declared war against the Israelites, who were defeated in a great battle. Thereupon, to draw down on

their arms the protection of God, and to inspire their troops with confidence, the Israelites brought to the camp the Ark of the Covenant, the most sacred object that they possessed. In their next encounter it was carried to the field of battle, attended by Ophni and Phinees, the two sons of Heli; but their presence was more likely to draw down the anger of God than to avert it. The battle was lost, the Ark of the Covenant fell into the hands of the Philistines, twenty thousand Israelites were left dead on the field, and Ophni and Phinees were among the slain.

Meanwhile the High Priest, now old and blind, sat at the door of his house, anxiously awaiting news of the battle. At length a man of the tribe of Benjamin, fleeing from the general slaughter, came to the spot. Heli eagerly inquired what tidings he brought. The soldier replied, that Israel had fled before the Philistines, that there had been great slaughter of the people, that his two sons, Ophni and Phinees, were dead, and that the Ark of God was taken. At these last words Heli fell backwards from the stool on which he was sitting, broke his neck, and died.

Thus did the vengeance of God fall, the same day, on the two wicked sons and the weak and indulgent father (1 Kings ii., iii., iv.)

#### QUEEN BLANCHE AND ST. LOUIS.

Queen Blanche, the mother of St. Louis, King of France, brought up her son in the most tender sentiments of piety, and in the most happy innocence. Above all things, she strove to impress upon his soul the most lively horror of sin, and a particular love of holy purity. Often when a child did she take him to her knee, and address him in these touching words, which became deeply imprinted on his heart, "I love you, my darling son, with all the tenderness of which a mother is capable, but I would rather see you dead at my feet than that you should ever commit a mortal sin." In after life St. Louis was heard to say that not a day had passed in which these words had not been present to his mind, and helped to preserve him from sin.—*Butler's Lives of the Saints.*

#### ST. MONICA AND ST. AUGUSTIN.

The great St. Augustin, Doctor of the Church, was blessed with a good mother, the virtuous St. Monica, who strove to instil into the mind of her son, from his earliest infancy, sentiments of piety and religion. Unhappily, the foolish indulgence and evil example of his father Patricius, who was a pagan, destroyed the effect of his mother's teaching. Wicked companions completed his ruin; he fell into many sinful disorders, and at length embraced the errors of the Manichees, who taught that there are two Gods, one the author of good, and the other of evil. St. Monica bitterly deplored the misfortune of her son, and never ceased to weep and pray for his conversion. With this view she prevailed on many

pious and learned men to reason with him, in order to convince him of his errors, but all their efforts were of no avail. Having one day earnestly implored a certain Bishop to attempt the same task, the latter excused himself on the ground of Augustin's youth and self-conceit, which rendered him incapable of listening to reason. As St. Monica still persisted in her request, the Bishop dismissed her, saying, "Go thy way; it cannot be that a child of those tears should perish." These words greatly consoled the good mother, who redoubled her sighs and prayers to God.

Not long after, St. Augustin, wishing to advance himself in his profession, which was that of rhetoric, left home privately to escape his mother's importunity, and sailed for Italy. St. Monica, on learning her son's departure, was at first inconsolable. She regarded that as the greatest of misfortunes which God, in his wonderful Providence, made use of in order to grant her prayer. Meanwhile her son had journeyed to Rome, and thence to Milan, where he gave public lessons in the art of rhetoric. At that time the great St. Ambrose was Bishop of Milan, and St. Augustin, hearing of his extraordinary learning and eloquence, visited him and went to hear his discourses. The words of the holy Bishop made a deep impression upon his mind. Touched by the grace of God, he at length, after a severe struggle with himself, renounced his errors, and received Baptism from the hands of St. Ambrose.

Meanwhile St. Monica, led by the hand of God, had followed her beloved son to Milan, where she witnessed the fulfilment of all her desires—his conversion and Baptism. Soon after she died peacefully in the arms of St. Augustin, whom she left behind her as the fruit of her prayers, to defend the Church by his learning and edify it by his virtue and sanctity.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

The following history, related by St. Augustin, affords an awful warning to disobedient and rebellious children, while at the same time it conveys a useful lesson to those parents who allow themselves to be so far carried away by the violence of passion as to invoke curses on the heads of their own offspring.

#### A MOTHER'S CURSE.

In the city of Cesarea in Cappadocia there lived a widow woman with ten children, who were all greatly wanting in the duties of filial respect and obedience. It happened on one occasion that the eldest son so far forgot himself as not only to load his mother with abuse, but even to raise his hand and strike her. Meanwhile the rest looked on in silence, without uttering a word of remonstrance, or exerting themselves in any way in her behalf. The unhappy woman, cut to the quick by their undutiful conduct, instead of praying to God, as she should have done, to convert and spare her,

guilty children, cursed them in her heart, and invoked the Divine vengeance on their heads. Then repairing to the Baptismal Font, where God had adopted them for his own, she prostrated herself on the ground, and implored of him to strike her children with some strange and terrible disease which should make them an object of horror to all beholders, and to scatter them over the face of the world as a warning to all who should be guilty of the like conduct. Almighty God, to punish at the same time the unnatural mother and her undutiful children, heard the words of her prayer, and fulfilled them. In a moment the whole of the ten children, both boys and girls, were seized with a terrible trembling of their limbs, which filled all who beheld them with amazement and horror. Ashamed any longer to appear in presence of those who were acquainted with their crime, they abandoned their home and their mother, and dispersed throughout the various provinces of the Empire.

St. Augustin relates that two of these children—one of whom was named Paul, and the other, his sister, Palladia—visited the city of Hippo in Africa at the time when he occupied the Episcopal chair. There they earnestly besought the Divine Mercy through the intercession of St. Stephen, whose relics had been lately translated from Palestine, and were daily glorified by God with numerous miracles. The young man Paul, after many days of earnest supplication, was cured in presence of all the people on Easter Sunday. Upon the following Tuesday St. Augustin mounted the pulpit, and pointing to the brother and sister who stood beside him, related to the people the history of this unhappy family. Then conjuring the faithful to unite in earnest prayer in behalf of Palladia, he led her to the chapel of St. Stephen and recommended her to the intercession of that holy martyr. Thereupon she fell into a refreshing slumber, and on awakening found herself completely cured.

St. Augustin then reascending the pulpit, addressed to the people an earnest exhortation, warning children to obey and respect their parents, and parents to refrain from heaping upon the heads of their children unnatural curses, of which they would repent when too late. "Learn, oh children!" said he, "learn, oh fathers and mothers! what you owe to each other, and what you have to fear from God if you neglect your duties. A mother prays bad prayers on her children, because she has received from them a grievous injury, and her prayers are heard by a Just and Angry God. But what benefit does she receive from her prayers? On the contrary, she is herself punished in her children. Ask, then, of God what you have no reason to fear, should he grant it; otherwise he will hear your prayer for your own greater chastisement."—*Histoires Edifiantes*.

Q. What is the duty of masters, mistresses, and other superiors?

A. The duty of masters, mistresses, and other superiors, is to take proper care of those under their charge, and to enable them to practise their religious duties.

We must now say a few words about the duties which *masters, mistresses, and other superiors* owe to those whom God has placed *under their charge*. Their obligations resemble in many respects those of parents, as all superiors are bound, each in his own sphere, to promote the spiritual and temporal welfare of those under their care. And first, with regard to the duties of *Masters*.

The Apostle St. Paul, in speaking of the obligations which every one owes to his own household, says, "If any one hath not care of his own, and especially those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is become worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. v. 8). From these words you see that St. Paul considers that a master, who neglects his duties to his servants, is guilty in some manner of the grievous crime of denying the faith, since he does not act up to its teaching; moreover, that he is worse than an infidel, since there are many who have not the light of the true faith, and yet fulfil exactly, as far as they know them, the duties which they owe to their dependants. How necessary, then, is it for masters to be well instructed as to what their duties are, and to apply themselves faithfully to discharge them!

In the first place, it is the duty of a master to act *justly* towards his servants. To defraud labourers of their wages is, as the Scripture tells us, one of those heinous sins which cry to heaven for vengeance. Now every master who does not act fairly to his servants or apprentices, either by not paying them their wages or delaying to do so, by exacting a greater amount of work than they are paid to render, or by not teaching them their trade, if bound to do so by previous agreement, is guilty of injustice, and will have to give a strict account of it to Him who is Lord of both master and servant. Hence the Apostle says, "Masters, do to your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven" (Col. iv. 1).

In the second place, a master is bound to treat his servants with gentleness and kindness. He should never forget that they are his brethren, children of the same Heavenly Father, and redeemed by the Precious Blood of

the same Saviour ; moreover, that they are fellow-servants with him of the same Divine Master. Hence St. Paul, speaking of the gentleness with which masters should treat their servants, says, " Know that the Lord both of them and you is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him " (Eph. vi. 9). For all are equal in the sight of God, rich and poor, princes and subjects, masters and servants ; or rather, it is the little, and humble, and poor of spirit, in whatever station of life they may be, who are alone great before God. A good Christian master remembering this, and viewing in the person of his servants, Him who became the servant of all in order to save all, will avoid all hasty and overbearing conduct. He will not be, as the Scripture says, " like a lion in his own house, terrifying and oppressing his servants " (Eccles. iv. 35) ; but, on the contrary, ever kind and considerate, making allowance for ignorance, inexperience, and human weakness, and acting towards his servants in all, as he would wish to be done by, if he were in their place. In one word, he will be, as he was formerly called,\* a father rather than a master to those of whom he has charge.

Thirdly, a master is bound to watch over the conduct of his servants, and to exhort, reprove, and correct them as occasion requires. A master is very guilty in the sight of God who allows cursing and swearing, obscene language, drunkenness, or other scandalous vices among those of whom he has charge. He should show his great displeasure at such conduct, and do all in his power to put a stop to it. If he cannot remedy the evil, he should dismiss the offender for the sake of those who might be led into sin by such wicked example. Above all, a master should be very careful never himself to do or say anything that could scandalise his servants, for if they are liable to be led astray by the example of each other, how much more by the example of one who is placed in authority over them !

In the fourth place, a master is bound to allow his

\* The master was anciently called *Paterfamilias*, that is, " Father of his household." Compare 4 Kings v. 13.

servants time to *practise their religious duties*, in other words, to hear Mass on Sundays and holidays, attend instructions, and approach from time to time to the Holy Sacraments. With respect to those servants or apprentices who form part of his household, his obligation is still stricter, for he is bound to see, as far as he is able, that they fulfil the necessary duties of religion. He should never forget that God has the first right to our service, and that to deprive his servants of the opportunity of fulfilling their religious duties is not only an injustice to them, but an outrage to God himself.

Finally, masters owe a debt of gratitude to those servants who have been long in their employment, and who have fulfilled their duty to them with fidelity. The Holy Scripture bids us look on a faithful servant as a friend rather than a servant, nay, even as a brother. "If thou have a faithful servant," says the wise man, "let him be to thee as thy own soul: treat him as a brother" (Eccles. xxxiii. 31). Surely, then, it is the duty of a master to take a kind interest in the welfare of such a servant, to relieve him in his wants, if it is in his power, and to assist him in his declining years.

These, my dear children, are the principal obligations of masters and mistresses in regard to their servants, especially in regard to those who form part of their household, and to whom they are bound by closer ties than to those who simply work in their employment. The neglect of these duties will be severely punished, but the faithful discharge of them will merit from the lips of our Divine Lord at the last day those consoling words addressed in the Gospel to the faithful steward of his master's goods, "Well done, good and faithful servant: because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. xxv. 23).

In conclusion, all superiors, whether princes, or pastors, teachers, or guardians, &c., are equally bound by this commandment to *take proper care of all under their charge*, and to fulfil faithfully the duties of their respective offices. They should ever remember that the power which they

possess comes from God, that it is given them to be exercised for the good of those who are placed under their care, and that God will require a strict account from them of the manner in which they have employed it.

Q. What does the fourth Commandment forbid?

A. The fourth Commandment forbids all contempt, stubbornness, and disobedience to our parents and lawful superiors.

We come now to speak of the sins which are forbidden by the fourth commandment. The catechism only mentions three, namely, *contempt*, *stubbornness*, and *disobedience*; but there are others which, like these, are opposed to the different duties that we are commanded by this commandment to practise.

To *contemn* or despise our parents is a grievous crime, since we are bound, as we have seen, by every motive to show them all honour and reverence. Those who are guilty of this sin are accursed by God. "Cursed," says the Almighty, "be he that honoureth not his father and his mother" (Deut. xxvii. 16). The curses of God, my dear children, are not like the curses of men; they are never spoken without being deserved and without being fulfilled. Hence that child who shows contempt for his parents will assuredly, unless he sincerely repents, experience the terrible judgments of God, probably even in this life, but most certainly in the next. Let us now see in what manner we may be guilty of this sin. There are many ways, more or less grievous, for example—

1. By speaking rudely to our parents, giving them back answers, saying *we do not care*, &c., or at least murmuring against them in our hearts.

2. By calling them names, either before their face or behind their back.

3. By mocking or laughing at them, mimicking their defects, or ridiculing their infirmities. Of this grievous sin the Holy Scripture says, "The eye that mocketh at his father, and that despiseth the labour of his mother in bearing him, let the ravens of the brook pick it out and the young eagles eat it" (Prov. xxx. 17). And again, "Glory not in the dishonour of thy father, for his shame



is no glory to thee" (Eccles. iii. 12). It was by laughing at the infirmity of his father Noah, and exposing it to his brothers, that Cham drew down the curse of God upon himself and his posterity.

4. By cursing our parents. By the command of God in the Old Law the child who had arrived at such a height of impiety as to dare to curse his father or mother, was ordered to be put to death without mercy. "He that curseth his father or mother shall die the death" (Exod. xxi. 17). And again, "He that curseth his father and mother, his lamp shall be put out in the midst of darkness" (Prov. xx. 20); that is to say, not only shall he be put to death, but he shall die accursed and abandoned by God.

Finally, a child is guilty of the highest degree of contempt to his parents, when he is so impious and unnatural as to strike them. This heinous crime was also, by the command of God, punished with death in the Old Law (Exod. xxi. 15), and has justly been looked upon with the greatest horror by all nations, even by those which were buried in the darkness of idolatry. In the early ages of the Church a child, who had been guilty of this sin, had to atone for it by the performance of a severe public penance for the space of seven years, during which time, besides the observance of a severe fast, he was not permitted to enter the door of the church, but had to remain without during the time of public service, weeping and bewailing his sin.

*Disobedience* is the next sin which we come to speak of. To this we may join *stubbornness*, which is a dogged obstinacy in resisting the commands of our superiors. Both these sins are opposed to that prompt, cheerful and entire submission which we are bound by this commandment to render to our parents and to all whom God has placed over us.

Disobedience and stubbornness are sins most hateful to the Almighty; they are, in fact, a rebellion against his authority, since all power, as the Apostle tells us, is from God, and those that hold it are placed over us by God himself. Both these sins spring from pride, for it is pride

which causes us to set up our own will in opposition to the authority established by God, and to say, like Lucifer and the rebel angels, "I will not obey." Hence we find that God in the Holy Scripture speaks of these sins as most grievous crimes, and worthy of the severest punishments. It was the disobedience of our first parents in eating the forbidden fruit which caused them to be driven from the garden of Paradise, and condemned with all their descendants not only to a life of labour and suffering, but also to both temporal and eternal death. In the Old Law we find that most severe punishments were enjoined by God himself against disobedient and unruly children. If any man had a stubborn and unruly son who would not obey his parent's commands, and after being corrected still persisted in his disobedience, he was directed to take and accuse him before the ancients sitting in judgment, after which all the people were to stone him to death, that so great a scandal might be removed from among them (Deut. xxi. 18, &c.). Let us never forget, my dear children, that the sin of disobedience is the same now in the sight of God as it was then, and is worthy of the same chastisement. It is true that the penalty of death is no longer enjoined by the public laws against the disobedient child, but no doubt the secret judgments of God fall upon him with equal severity both in this and in the next world. His life is full of misery and affliction; frequently he is cut off by the hand of the Almighty in the midst of his days, and if he is spared by the Mercy of God, who waits for his repentance, he usually experiences in later life from his own children the same ingratitude and undutiful conduct with which *he* embittered the days of his parents.

Though disobedience is a sin so hateful in the sight of God and worthy of such severe punishment, I must remark, however, that all acts of disobedience are by no means equally grievous. To disobey in small matters is evidently not so great a sin as to disobey in things of great importance. Thus it is a much less fault to break a rule made to preserve order, than it is to disobey a command the object of which is to keep us from falling into

sin, such as when we are told not to play with some bad companion or not to go to certain dangerous places of amusement. Those children, however, who accustom themselves to disobey in little things, grow up so wayward and self-willed that soon they rebel against all authority, and bring upon themselves the Anger of God and the curse which never fails to follow, even in this life, the stubborn and disobedient child.

There is a terrible example related in the Scripture of the light in which God regards, and the severity with which he punishes the sin of disobedience. I mean the history of the

#### REJECTION OF KING SAUL.

Almighty God, having raised Saul from a low station in life to the throne of Israel, ordered him by the mouth of the prophet Samuel to march against the Amalecites and utterly destroy their nation, without sparing either man or beast. Saul accordingly went out to battle and gained a complete victory; but he neglected to carry out the instructions of the prophet, and spared both Agag, king of Amalec, and the best and fattest of the flocks. Soon afterwards Samuel, at God's command, came to the camp, and hearing the bleating of sheep and the lowing of cattle, asked Saul what the sound meant. The king replied that it was a portion of the spoils which they had preserved to offer in sacrifice. "What!" said Samuel, "doth the Lord desire holocausts and victims, and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed? For obedience is better than sacrifices, and to hearken better than to offer the fat of rams. Because it is like the sin of witchcraft to rebel, and like the crime of idolatry to refuse to obey." He then went on to tell him that because he had rejected the command of God, God had rejected him, and would take away his kingdom and give it to another (1 Kings xv.)

From this example we see the heinousness of disobedience. God himself compares it to the sins of witchcraft and idolatry, two of the greatest crimes that we can conceive. We also see that all the prayers we offer, and good works we perform, are of little value if not accompanied with an humble and docile heart; for "obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken"—that is to listen and obey—is better than to offer the richest gifts. The following is another example from Scripture of the

terrible and visible judgments, with which God sometimes punishes the sin of disobedience.

#### THE DISOBEDIENT PROPHET.

When Jeroboam, king of Israel, was one day offering incense before the golden calf which he had erected at Bethel, a prophet was sent by God to announce to him the punishment that awaited his impiety. The king, enraged, ordered the man of God to be seized, but the arm which he raised against him was in a moment withered up and hung useless by his side, until it was restored by God at the prayer of the prophet. Hereupon Jeroboam earnestly entreated the holy man to stay and dine with him, promising to bestow upon him the richest presents ; but the prophet, who had been strictly ordered by God not to eat or drink in that place, excused himself and set out upon his return home.

Meanwhile another prophet, advanced in years, who dwelt at Bethel, hearing what had happened, saddled his ass and went in pursuit of the man of God, whom he overtook upon the road resting under the shade of a tree. Having saluted him with respect, he begged that he would return and eat with him. As the prophet of Juda continued to excuse himself on account of the command which God had given him, the other declared that an Angel had appeared to him and commanded him in the Name of God to bring the stranger back to eat with him. Hereupon the latter yielded to his entreaties, and returned with him to his house ; but while they were at table the prophet of Bethel, inspired by God, foretold him that, inasmuch as he had disobeyed the Divine command, his body should never be laid in the tomb of his forefathers. And so it happened ; for he had not travelled far on his return, when a lion sprang upon him and devoured him. The old prophet, hearing of the disaster, came and took his body and laid it in his own sepulchre (3 Kings xiii.)

#### A JUST RETRIBUTION.

A certain father, who led a sinful and scandalous life, had a son who, in consequence of his evil training, was as wicked and abandoned as himself. The father was drunken and degraded ; the son wilful, passionate, and rebellious. One day when the father reproached his son for his undutiful conduct, the latter in a fit of fury seized his father by the hair of his head, threw him on the ground, and dragged him to the very door of the house. Having arrived at the threshold, the old man raised his voice and cried out, "Stop, wretched son ; when I was your age I never dragged my father further than this." Thus did the unhappy father acknowledge the Justice of God, who permitted his son to treat him as he had treated his own parent.—*Anecdotes Chretiennes.*

## THE UNDUTIFUL SON.

A gentleman of property had an only son whom he loved tenderly. Upon his son's marriage he gave up all he had to him on condition that he would afford him a home for the rest of his life. The old man soon became infirm, but instead of bearing patiently with the infirmities which often accompany old age, his daughter-in-law expressed herself highly disgusted with him for his want of cleanliness at his meals. One day, when they were to have company, she went so far as to tell her husband that she would not sit down to table unless the old man was made to take his dinner in the kitchen. Her husband was so weak and unmindful of what was due to his aged parent as to consent to this heartless proposal, and accordingly bade his father go for that day to dine with the servants. The old man was cut to the quick at his son's unfilial conduct; he wept bitterly, and declared that he would sooner go and beg his bread than remain any longer with such undutiful children. His little grandson hearing what he said, and seeing him go upstairs to fetch a blanket to put over his shoulders, for it was in the depth of winter, ran to his father and told him that grandpapa was gone to get a blanket to wrap himself in that he might go and beg his bread. "Let him go, if he likes," replied the unfeeling son. "But don't let him take a whole blanket," said the child. "And why so?" asked his father. "Because I shall want the other half for you," replied the boy, "when *you* grow old and I turn you out to beg your bread." These words went to the heart of the father, and fearing that his undutiful conduct might one day be imitated by his own son, he ran after the old man, humbly begged his pardon, and ever after treated him with proper respect and affection.—*Mrs. Herbert.*

Q. Is it lawful to belong to any Secret Society?

A. It is sinful to belong to any Secret Society that plots against the Church or State, or to any Society that, by means of its secrecy, is condemned by the Church. St. Paul says: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; he that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation" (Rom. xiii. 1, 2).

This question and answer, my dear children, relate to *Secret Societies*, which are strongly condemned by the Church, and are the fruitful cause of innumerable evils. You will wonder, perhaps, why these Societies are called *Secret*, since we know the names of many among them; for example, the Freemasons, Ribbonmen, Nihilists, &c.; nay, we may even know the days and places of their meeting, and the names of those persons who belong to them.

The reason is, because the members take a solemn oath not to reveal the secrets of the Society, no matter what may be the cause or motive for doing so. Now, such an oath is, in itself, sinful, for it may sometimes be our duty to tell a secret, and a person cannot, without grievous sin, swear not to do what the Law of God may command him to do. It is under the cover of these secret oaths that plots and rebellions are hatched against the Church and the State, that religion is outraged, and plans of revenge, violence, and plunder, are formed, and carried into execution. Therefore, all such societies are detestable and accursed in the sight of God and his Church. No one who is a member of them can be admitted to the Holy Sacraments, nor can he be absolved, even upon his death-bed, unless he sincerely repents and renounces them for ever. In conclusion, bear in mind always the words of St. Paul, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; he that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist purchase to themselves damnation."

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### THIRTIETH INSTRUCTION.

*The Fifth Commandment—What it forbids—Sins which tend to destroy the life of the body—Wilful murder, fighting, quarrelling, injurious words, anger, hatred, and revenge—Sins which tend to destroy the life of the soul—Scandal and bad example—What the Fifth Commandment commands.*

Q. What is the Fifth Commandment?

A. The Fifth Commandment is, "Thou shalt not kill."

We come now to speak of the fifth commandment, which is, *Thou shalt not kill*. God alone, my dear children, is the Supreme Master of life and death. It is He who has given us our life, and it is He only who has a right to take it. By this commandment he teaches us that whoever, without his authority, takes away or does what tends to take away the life of man, usurps his place, and is guilty of a grievous outrage against him. Such a

one, moreover, commits a crying injustice against him whose life he takes; for, as there is nothing that we usually esteem of greater value than our life, so there cannot be a greater injury done us than for any one, by violence, to deprive us of it. The fifth commandment is given us by God to protect and enable us to preserve this precious gift.

You might, perhaps, think, from the wording of this commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," that wilful murder is the only sin which it forbids; but this is far from being the case. It forbids not only the unjust taking away of human life, but also all those acts, and words, and thoughts, which, by their very nature, tend to lead to the commission of that great crime—such, for example, as wounding, striking, calling injurious names, giving way to feelings of envy, hatred, or desire of revenge. For murder is not a sin which a person commits all at once. He is usually roused to it by hatred or envy, or he has received some real or fancied injury from another and thirsts for revenge, or he has quarrelled with some one, and from angry words has come to blows, and, in a fit of passion, has inflicted a deadly wound. Hence all these sins are forbidden, as well as the sin of murder, by the fifth commandment; for though they are not always followed by the commission of this dreadful crime, yet they often are, and, if not checked in time, may, perhaps, lead to the taking away of human life. Wherefore our Lord, in explaining this commandment to the Jews, says in the Gospel, "You have heard that it was said to them of old, *Thou shalt not kill*; but I say to you not to be angry with your brother" (Matt. v. 21, &c.); thus plainly showing that the lesser sins of anger, injurious language, &c., are no less forbidden by this commandment than the heinous crime of wilful murder.

In addition to the above-named sins which, more or less, tend to the taking away of the life of the body, we are also forbidden by this commandment to do anything to kill or to injure the soul. For besides our *natural* life, which consists in the union of the soul with the body, we have also another life which is called *supernatural*, by

which the soul lives now in the sight of God, and will live for all eternity in heaven. This life is the grace and friendship of God, and, since it is eternal, it is of far more value than our bodily life with its brief existence. Whoever, therefore, destroys the life of the soul by leading another into mortal sin is guilty of a spiritual murder—a crime which is as strictly forbidden by the fifth commandment, as is the wilful murder of the body.

Q. What does the Fifth Commandment forbid?

A. The Fifth Commandment forbids all wilful murder, fighting, quarrelling, and injurious words; and also scandal and bad example.

Q. Does the Fifth Commandment forbid anger?

A. Yes; the Fifth Commandment forbids anger, and, still more hatred and revenge.

In these two answers, my dear children, you have a list of the sins which are forbidden by the fifth commandment. Those which relate to the life of the body are seven in number, namely, wilful murder, fighting, quarrelling, injurious words, anger, hatred, and revenge. Those which regard the life of the soul are only two, namely, giving scandal and bad example. We will speak, first, of those which relate to our bodily life.

By *wilful murder*, we mean the taking away of human life, unless it be done by lawful authority or in lawful self-defence. In these two cases to kill is no crime, since it is permitted by Almighty God. Hence the soldier, who slays the enemies of his country on the field of battle; the executioner, who carries out the public law on condemned criminals; the traveller who, when attacked by robbers, to save his own life takes that of his assailant, are not guilty of murder, nor, indeed, of any sin against the law of God. We are not, however, permitted to take human life to preserve ourselves from a trifling injury either in person or property, for the life of our neighbour is of far greater value than any slight loss or injury to ourselves. Thus it would not be lawful, usually speaking, to kill a robber who simply demands our purse, but does not seek to take away our life.

I need hardly tell you, my dear children, that of all sins wilful murder is one of the most grievous. For he



who takes away human life destroys one of God's noblest works, defaces the image of God—that is, man himself created to God's image and likeness—and offers the most horrible outrage to God, who alone has a right to fix the moment and manner of our death. Moreover, the murderer inflicts the most grievous injury on his fellow-man, and sends his soul, often, alas! unprepared and without a moment's warning before the judgment-seat of the Almighty. Hence God tells us in the Holy Scripture that murder is one of those heinous crimes which cry to him for vengeance. "The voice of thy brother's blood," said he to the murderer Cain, "crieth to me from the earth" (Gen. iv. 10). And he goes on to pronounce him accursed on the face of the earth, which had sucked in the blood that he had shed. This terrible curse of God follows the murderer wherever he goes. Tormented by the remembrance of his crime and the bitter remorse of his conscience, he knows no longer happiness or peace. The image of his murdered victim haunts him both by day and by night. He seems ever to see before his eyes his bleeding form, and to hear his voice crying for vengeance upon his murderer. Nor is that vengeance long delayed, even in this life; for seldom does it happen that the murderer escapes that terrible penalty of a violent and shameful death which God himself in the Old Law, and which the laws of almost every nation on the earth, have pronounced against those who are guilty of this heinous crime. Not unfrequently, indeed, do we see the murderer, through anguish of mind, give himself up, of his own accord, to the officers of justice, in the hopes of appeasing thereby the bitter reproaches of his conscience. A painful and disgraceful death seems to him better than the life of misery he leads.

The crime of suicide, which is the taking away of our own life, is no less forbidden by this commandment than the murder of our neighbour. For we are the creatures of God, and it is from Him we have received our life, to be employed in doing his Adorable Will; we cannot, therefore, lay it down when we please, but only at the moment and in the manner which He appoints. The

folly of suicide is equal to its wickedness, for he who kills himself to escape from pain, disgrace, or any of the ills of life, knows that he thereby casts himself into the flames of hell, which infinitely surpass all that man can endure in this world. He flies from temporal evils, which soon pass away, and which, if borne with patience, are the source of eternal joy, into the midst of cruel torments, which he must needs endure for endless ages. Can there be a greater folly and madness?

Notice, moreover, my dear children, that we are not only forbidden to take away our life, but to do anything that will naturally tend to injure or destroy it. For life is a precious gift of God of which we must take reasonable care, that we may be able to use it for the intentions of the giver. Hence you will see that gluttony, drunkenness, and excesses of every kind, are strictly forbidden by this commandment, since by them thousands are injured irrevocably in mind and body and hurried to an early grave. We shall, however, have occasion to speak of these sins in another part of the catechism.

Now, can any of you tell me which was the first murder that was ever committed, and who was the first murderer? Yes, the first murder was that of the innocent Abel, one of the sons of Adam, and it was his brother Cain who killed him. The history of this dreadful crime is related as follows in the Holy Scripture.

#### CAIN AND ABEL.

“Abel was a shepherd, and Cain a husbandman. And it came to pass that Cain offered of the fruits of the earth gifts to the Lord. Abel also offered of the firstlings of his flock, and the Lord had respect to Abel and to his offerings. But to Cain and his offerings he had no respect: and Cain was exceedingly angry, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said to him, *Why art thou angry? and why is thy countenance fallen?*

“And Cain said to Abel his brother, *Let us go forth abroad.* And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and slew him. And the Lord said to Cain, *Where is thy brother Abel?* And he said, *I know not: am I my brother's keeper?* And he said to him, *What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the earth. Now, therefore, cursed shalt thou be upon the earth, which hath opened her mouth and received the blood of*

*thy brother at thy hand. When thou shalt till it, it shall not yield to thee its fruit : a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be upon the earth. And Cain said to the Lord, My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, that whosoever found him should not kill him "* (Gen. iv.)

The sin of *fighting* is the next which is mentioned in the catechism. It comes after the sin of murder, because it often leads to it. A quarrel arises, blows are struck, the passions are inflamed to a pitch of frenzy, some deadly weapon is seized, and in a moment one of the parties lies a bleeding victim on the ground. It is true that all fights do not end in so horrible a crime, but they sometimes do, and when our angry passions are aroused, we know not what may be the end. How often do we hear of children even, who, while fighting with some playmate, in the heat of passion have struck a deadly blow. A boy has seized a stone which lay near, and hurled it at his companion, without heeding the consequences, or perhaps has drawn a knife and inflicted on him a mortal wound. And now he lies a corpse upon the ground ; all the bitter tears of the murderer, and the anguish and remorse which will accompany him to the grave, cannot restore the life which he has taken. Oh ! my dear children, avoid the wicked habit of fighting, which is so contrary to Christian charity, and often leads to such terrible consequences. If any one strikes you, do not strike him back, but forgive him from your heart, and return him good for evil. This is true courage, to be able to bear an injury patiently and to conquer your angry passions.

The next sin spoken of is that of *quarrelling*, which often leads to fighting, as fighting, in its turn, leads to the crime of murder. By quarrelling we mean wrangling and angry disputing, which are very contrary to Christian charity and most displeasing to God. For He whom we serve is the God of peace, and, if we are truly his children and disciples, we also shall be lovers of peace. Strive, therefore, to be always at peace with every one, especially with your brothers and sisters, also with your playmates and companions. Let there be no disputing or quarrelling amongst you, but speak gently and kindly to one another.

If any one contradicts you, do not contradict him back ; if any one speaks to you unkindly, answer him mildly and lovingly, and you will make a friend instead of an enemy. "A mild answer," says the wise man, "breaketh wrath, but a harsh word stirreth up fury" (Prov. xv. 1). Be also kind and good-natured in your conduct towards others, not proud and self-willed, always wanting your own way, but ready to give up your will to theirs as long as you can do so without offending God. For if they want you to do anything wrong, such as to steal, disobey your parents, say bad words, &c., you must never give way to them, no matter what they say or do to you. Finally, do your best not only to keep peace yourselves, but also to promote it among your companions. Stop a quarrel when you can by kind and gentle words, or by saying or doing something that will turn the thoughts of those who are angry to a fresh subject. Thus shall you merit that special blessing promised to peacemakers, and show yourselves true children of your Heavenly Father. "Blessed," says our Lord, "are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God" (Matt. v. 9).

Next to the sin of quarrelling comes that of *injurious words* ; for seldom does a quarrel take place without abusive words, or rude and insulting nicknames, being bandied to and fro. Indeed it is the bad habit of calling names which often leads to quarrelling and fighting ; for he who is insulted soon retorts, and the passions being aroused, angry words are quickly followed by blows. Our B. Lord, in his Sermon on the Mount, speaks of this sin in very severe terms, telling us that all abusive names are forbidden by the fifth commandment, and are worthy of the severest punishment. "You have heard," says he, "that it was said to them of old, *Thou shalt not kill, and whoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment*. But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, *Raca*, shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, *Thou fool*, shall be in danger of hell fire" (Matt. v. 21, 22). From these words we see that injurious names, if they are such as to be a very

grievous insult to the person we address, may even amount to the guilt of mortal sin which is punished with the eternal fire of hell. Thus, among the Jews, to call a person a *fool* was considered the greatest insult you could offer him, and was therefore a great crime. Among us it is not looked upon in the same light, nor would it usually amount to the guilt of grievous sin, unless it were spoken to a parent or superior.

There are some children who are so unkind and full of malice as to take a pleasure in calling their companions ugly nicknames, in order to tease them and put them in a passion. Sometimes they are so mean as to take advantage of the bodily infirmities of others to vex and annoy them, for example, of their being lame, or blind, or ill-shaped, &c. Those who act thus are generally great cowards, for they only do it to those who are weaker than themselves. But they should remember that by teasing and annoying others, they act the part of the devil, who desires nothing so much as to arouse our angry passions and cause a quarrel. To be fond of teasing and vexing others is the sign of a bad heart, for no one who is kind and charitable can take a pleasure in causing his neighbour pain and annoyance.

#### ST. MACARIUS AND THE IDOLATER.

One day as St. Macarius was walking in the desert with one of his disciples, the latter went on a little in advance. He had not gone far before he met a heathen priest, running with a heavy log of wood upon his shoulders, whom he thus accosted, "Where art thou going, thou devil?" The idolater, being much enraged, took the log, gave him a severe beating with it, and left him half dead upon the ground. He then put the wood back on his shoulders and went on his way, running as before. Soon after he met St. Macarius, who thus addressed him, "God save thee, poor labouring man." "You do well," replied the pagan, "to salute me in a friendly manner." Upon which the saint rejoined, "I saw that you were tired, and were, nevertheless, running hastily, so I greeted you in order that you might stop and rest yourself awhile." The heathen priest, hearing these words, cried out, "From this I know you to be a true servant of God." Then, casting himself at his feet, he implored St. Macarius to instruct him in the Christian religion and receive him into the number of his disciples.—*Lives of the Fathers of the Desert.*

## INJURIOUS WORDS THE CAUSE OF A SOUL'S DAMNATION.

Two gentlemen who had been for a long time on the most friendly terms, had a violent quarrel, and became known in the town where they resided as declared enemies. Their hatred had lasted many years, when one of the two fell dangerously ill, and lay at the point of death. His friends earnestly entreated him to send for his confessor and settle the affairs of his soul, to which he at length consented. The priest, on his arrival, knowing well the circumstances of the case, represented to the sick man the necessity of being reconciled with his enemy before he could be admitted to the Sacraments. His penitent consented to the proposal, and the other party was sent for; meanwhile the priest proceeded to hear his confession.

His enemy, having at length arrived, was introduced into the chamber of the sick man, who asked his pardon for the offence he had given, and begged that they might be reconciled. The other party consented and soon after took his leave, but, on quitting the room, was heard to exclaim to some one at the door, "the coward is afraid." At these words the dying man sat up in his bed, and cried out in a violent passion, "No, I am not afraid, and, as a proof of it, I return you all my former hatred." So saying, he fell back and expired.—*Mrs. Herbert.*

We now come to speak of the sin of *anger*, which is a feeling of displeasure at some real or supposed injury, with a desire of punishing the offender. Anger is called in your catechism one of the seven deadly sins, because it is a sin which, if not checked in time, is sure to bring death to the soul. It does not follow, however, that anger is always a mortal sin; sometimes it is only venial, and sometimes it is no sin at all. Hence St. Paul says, "Be angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your anger" (Eph. iv. 26). You will wonder, perhaps, how a person can be angry and not commit any sin. I will show you what I mean by an example.

Let us suppose that one of your companions has hit you a blow in the face. You feel very angry, and you cannot help feeling angry at first, for the blow has hurt you. There is no sin so far, because it is natural for us, being made of flesh and blood, and not of wood or stone, to feel angry when we are hurt. But the next moment your Guardian Angel whispers to you to bear the blow patiently for the love of Jesus, who for us was buffeted

and struck upon the face, yet bore it like a meek and gentle lamb without opening his mouth. Immediately you try to check your angry feelings, you say a little prayer in your heart to our B. Lord, and speak good-naturedly or do a kind turn to the boy who struck you. Here you have done exactly what the Apostle tells you, you have been angry and yet you have not sinned; on the contrary, you have gained a victory over yourself and over the devil, and have merited a great reward hereafter.

Now let us suppose that you act quite differently. The blow puts you in a passion, and you do not try to overcome it. You speak angrily to the boy who struck you, you call him names, you try to hit him back. You do not wish to do him any great harm, but to hurt him a little as he has hurt you. In this case you have been angry and sinned, but your sin is a venial and not a mortal one.

But perhaps the blow you have received has put you in a very great passion, through your not trying at all to check or control your temper. You call your companion the worst names you can think of, and blinded by rage seize whatever is at hand to strike or throw at him, careless what injury you do him, as long as you can only revenge yourself. In this case there is great reason to fear that your anger will amount to the guilt of mortal sin.

You see now how anger may be either a mortal sin, a venial sin, or no sin at all, according to the manner in which we indulge or resist it.

Anger, my dear children, when it is not checked, is the fruitful source of innumerable crimes. Quarrelling and fighting, cursing and swearing, revenge and hatred, bloodshed and even murder, are often the terrible consequences of this detestable passion. Hence we cannot watch against it too carefully, or fight against it too earnestly. For anger is like a viper which, if we cherish it in our bosom, may at any time turn against us and inflict a mortal wound. So does our passion, if we are in the habit of indulging it, often hurry us, when we least think of it, into the most frightful crimes. Moreover, it is the cause of great misery and unhappiness, for the passionate man is a torment to himself and a torment to every one about

him. He is not, indeed, fit for the company of men, for he is no longer a reasonable being, but is guided like a brute beast only by the blind impulse of his rage. No wonder that he is an object of ridicule to every one about him, and is shunned and avoided by all that know him. Have you ever seen a child in a great fit of passion? His eyes start from their sockets, and glare like the eyes of an angry cat; his cheeks become pale and livid, his face ugly and frightful, so that you would hardly know him. He shouts at the top of his voice like a madman; he stamps on the ground; it is dangerous for any one to come near him, for he knows not what he strikes at, and is sometimes so foolish as to break and destroy all that he lays his hands on. Finally, he generally ends by a passionate fit of crying. Can you imagine a more pitiable and ridiculous object?

In order to preserve yourselves from the fatal consequences of the sin of anger, you must fight against it while you are still young. Like every other bad passion, it grows stronger and stronger the older you get and the more you indulge it; while, on the contrary, if you generously strive against it, it grows weaker and weaker, and gives you less trouble each succeeding day. And how are you to strive against it? In the first place, you must earnestly ask of God to help you in the combat, both when you say your daily prayers, hear Mass, or frequent the Sacraments, and also, in the moment of danger, that is, when you are beginning to feel vexed or impatient. Then you must join to the grace, which God will certainly give you, your own good efforts, keeping back the angry word which flies to your lips, and trying to speak gently and kindly to him who has injured you, or not to speak at all till your anger is gone by. Finally, you should set before your eyes the example of our dear Lord, who bore with such infinite patience the greatest injuries from his own creatures, allowing himself to be insulted, buffeted, spit upon, scourged and nailed to the cross without so much as uttering a single word of reproach. Follow these three rules, and you will soon obtain a glorious victory over the passion of anger, a victory which God will



reward with many blessings here, and with the crown of eternal life. Do not be discouraged if you are naturally hasty, for though it may cost you more efforts to overcome your anger than it does those who are of a contrary disposition, the victory will be all the more glorious and the reward greater. Thus St. Francis of Sales, who was naturally of a hasty temper, became, by the victories he gained over himself, a model of meekness and an illustrious saint.

“LET NOT THE SUN GO DOWN UPON YOUR ANGER.”\*

It is said of St. John the Patriarch of Alexandria, commonly called the Almoner on account of his extraordinary charities, that he conquered all his enemies by his meekness; and by his sweet and amiable disposition converted his bitterest opponents into his warmest friends and supporters.

Upon one occasion he had recourse to Nicetas, the governor of the city, in behalf of the poor of his flock, who were in danger of being grievously afflicted by an oppressive tax which it was proposed to levy on them. He was, however, received with great coldness and even with insult; for the governor, being prejudiced against St. John by certain calumnies which had reached his ear, instead of listening to him with the respect to which his sacred character and eminent virtue entitled him, flew into a passion and abruptly turned his back upon him. The holy man showed no signs of indignation or displeasure, but when the evening was come, reflecting with sorrow on what had passed, he sent a friend to the house of Nicetas with this short message—“The sun is about to set.” The governor, touched with the allusion to the words of Scripture, “Let not the sun go down upon your anger,” instantly rose and went to meet the Patriarch, at whose feet he cast himself, confessing his fault and earnestly imploring pardon. St. John tenderly embraced him, and assured him that he was already forgiven. This happy reconciliation caused the greatest edification to all the citizens, who knew not which to admire most, the humility of Nicetas or the meekness of their holy Archbishop.—*Butler's Saints' Lives*.

Hatred is the next sin mentioned, and it is, of all other sins, the one most opposed to Christian Charity. For Charity teaches us to love our neighbour as ourselves, whereas hatred leads us to abhor and detest our neighbour; it makes us feel sorry at his happiness and glad at his misfortune. He that has given himself up to this

\* Ephes. iv. 26.

detestable sin no longer knows peace or happiness. The object of his hatred is ever before his mind, his heart is full of rancour and bitterness, and he becomes gloomy, restless, and miserable.

The sin of hatred is, moreover, most heinous in the sight of God, who is a God of love, and who, though he meets with so many injuries and outrages from his ungrateful creatures, loves them all, and hates nothing of those things which he has made (Wisd. xi. 25). In this he teaches us to follow his own Divine example, bidding us to love our neighbour and even our enemies for his sake. Without this love we cannot please God; all our works of piety or virtue, our prayers, our Communions, our fasts, our almsdeeds, our mortifications, will not avail us if we cherish in our hearts feelings of hatred against our fellow-man. Hence St. John says, "If any man say, *I love God*, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he seeth, how can he love God whom he seeth not?" (1 John iv. 20). And in other places the same Apostle, to show us the evil and terrible consequences of the sin of hatred, compares it to the heinous crime of wilful murder. "Whosoever hateth his brother," he says, "is a murderer" (1 John iii. 15); that is, he is a murderer in his heart, since his hatred, if not checked, will lead him to that sin, or at least to desire and rejoice at his neighbour's death.

Notice, however, my dear children, that there is a great difference between *hating* and *disliking* a person. To dislike another is not always a sin; we cannot help disliking those, for example, who are proud, selfish, or quarrelsome. But then we must not give way to our dislike, or show it by black looks or any unkind word or action. On the contrary, we must try to check it, to put away uncharitable thoughts and suspicions, and to speak to and act towards those whom we dislike with charity and kindness. If we find that, instead of resisting, we indulge our dislike, that we are often brooding over it, and take every opportunity of showing it, we should redouble our efforts and pray earnestly to God to enable us to overcome these dangerous feelings, which if not

checked, will sooner or later lead us to the grievous crime of hatred. The following history from the Lives of the Saints will show you how the sin of hatred serves to harden the heart and shut out from the soul the grace of Almighty God.

#### SAPRICIUS AND NICEPHORUS.

Sapricius and Nicephorus were two Christians who dwelt in the same town during the persecution of the Emperor Valerian. For many years they entertained for each other the affection of brothers, till at last an unhappy quarrel took place between them, and their former love was succeeded by the most bitter hatred. After some time Nicephorus, entering into himself and being touched with remorse, conceived a great desire to be reconciled to Sapricius. He accordingly applied to some friends of the latter to procure a meeting between them, but in vain. He then went in person to the house of Sapricius, and, throwing himself at his feet, besought him to consent to a reconciliation ; but Sapricius refused to listen to the proposal.

Meanwhile a violent persecution broke out against the Church, and Sapricius, who was known to be a Christian, was seized and brought before the judge. Although cruelly tortured in many ways, he persisted in his profession of faith, and declared that he would rather die than sacrifice to idols. Upon this confession he was condemned to lose his head.

Nicephorus, hearing of what had passed and that Sapricius was actually on the way to execution, ran from his house as fast as he could, and met him at the end of a street. There casting himself upon the ground, he besought him more earnestly than ever to pardon him ; but the heart of Sapricius was hardened by hatred, and he turned away his head. Nicephorus, almost broken-hearted, ran to the place of execution by another road, and there throwing himself on his knees before Sapricius cried out, "Martyr of the true God, pardon me, I conjure you !" but the wretched Sapricius refused to listen. At the same moment Sapricius, by a just judgment of God, was seized with a terrible fear of death, and when told to lay his head upon the block, cried out trembling, "Why would you put me to death? I am ready to offer sacrifice." Nicephorus, grieved to the heart at the apostacy of the wretched Sapricius, and feeling himself animated with a courage which God bestowed upon him in reward of his charity, cried aloud that he was a Christian, and ready to die for his faith. The Roman judge instantly condemned him to be beheaded, and thus in a moment he received the glorious crown of martyrdom, which Sapricius had deservedly lost.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

The next sin mentioned as forbidden by this commandment is *revenge*. Revenge is the desire or act of returning

evil for evil, whereas we are bound by the law of God to return good for evil, after the example of our dear Lord, who prayed on the cross and shed his blood for those who persecuted and put him to death. Revenge is the daughter of anger, for, when we are angry with any one, our first thought frequently is to say something unkind to him, or to speak ill of him, or to strike or otherwise injure him. If we give way to think of returning evil for evil, we are guilty of revengeful thoughts, and if we actually do the evil we think of, we are guilty of revengeful actions. When we come to confession we should confess whether we really took revenge, and in what way, or whether we only desired it.

Our B. Lord, in explaining the fifth commandment, strictly forbids the sin of revenge, whether it be committed in deed or in thought only. "You have heard," said he, "that it hath been said, *An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.* But I say to you not to resist evil." And again—"I say to you, *Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you, that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and raineth upon the just and unjust*" (Matt. v. 38, 39; 44, 45). From these words we see that to return good for evil is the revenge of a Christian, the only one that is permitted him by the law of God. If any one has injured us, he is accountable to God, and God will certainly punish him if he does not repent. "Revenge is mine, and I will repay them in due time, says the Lord" (Deut. xxxii. 35). But, on the contrary, he will punish *us* if we do not forgive our enemy from our heart, much more if we seek to revenge ourselves upon him. Wherefore the wise man says, "He that seeketh to revenge himself shall find vengeance from the Lord, and he will surely keep his sins in remembrance" (Ecclus. xxviii. 1). And our B. Saviour expressly tells us that if we forgive others their offences, our Heavenly Father will forgive us our offences; but if we will not forgive others their offences, neither will our Heavenly Father forgive us our offences (Matt. vi. 14, 15). If

ever, then, my dear children, you are tempted to revenge yourselves, think of these words of Jesus Christ ; remember, too, the great debt which you owe to God by your sins, and that you cannot hope for mercy from Him if you do not show mercy to others. Pray, also, earnestly to God in those moments of temptation ; he will calm the storm that rages within you, and when by his grace you have overcome your angry passion, and made your victory still more perfect by praying for and doing good to your enemy, you will feel in your soul a sweet peace and joy of heart, which are but a foretaste and pledge of that eternal reward which God has in store for the meek and humble.

The following history is handed down to us by St. Francis of Sales. The event which he relates occurred at Padua, where he made a portion of his studies.

#### THE STUDENT OF PADUA.

At the time when St. Francis was studying at Padua, the students of the University indulged in the dangerous and wicked practice of parading the streets at night time, armed with swords. Whomever they met, they questioned as to his name and business, and if he refused to reply, they drew their swords upon him. On one occasion it happened that a student, meeting one of his companions whom he did not recognise, put to him the usual question, and, on his refusal to reply, stabbed him to the heart. Fearing the consequences, the murderer took refuge in the house of a widow, whose son was his intimate friend, and, confessing what he had done, begged of her to conceal him in some secret place until the matter was hushed up. The good woman consented, and conducted him to a private room ; but what was her grief and astonishment when, a few moments after, her own son was carried home a bleeding corpse ! She at once perceived that the youth whom she had secreted was his murderer, and running to the place where he lay hid, she asked him what her son had done that he should treat him so cruelly. The student, almost beside himself with grief at hearing that it was his friend whom he had slain, instead of begging for mercy, besought her to deliver him up to the officers of justice, that he might atone for his crime with his life. The poor mother, however, being very charitable, would not hear of it. "No," said she, "I do not wish to avenge my son's death with your blood. All I ask of you is, that you should repent of your sin and change your life." The young man readily promised to do so, and shortly after she furnished him with all that he required, and assisted him to make his escape beyond reach of pursuit. This act of mercy was so pleasing to God, that he permitted the soul of the deceased youth

to appear to the mother, and assure her that thereby she had procured his release from purgatory, where he would otherwise have been long detained.—*Life of St. Francis of Sales.*

I have now explained to you the sins which are forbidden by the fifth commandment as tending more or less directly to the taking away of human life; that is, the life of the body. But as I have said, we have another life far more precious than that of the body, which we are equally forbidden to injure or destroy, namely, the life of the soul, which consists in the union of the soul with God by sanctifying grace. The catechism mentions two sins which tend to the destruction of this spiritual life, namely, *scandal* and bad example. It is of these that we now come to speak.

Q. Why are scandal and bad example forbidden by the Fifth Commandment?

A. Scandal and bad example are forbidden by the Fifth Commandment, because they lead to the injury and spiritual death of our neighbour's soul.

Yes, my dear children, these two grievous sins tend to take away the life of our neighbour's soul by inflicting on it the deadly wound of mortal sin. By *scandal* we mean any word or deed which is calculated to lead another into sin, so that *bad example* is really a kind of scandal; for when we commit a sin in the presence of others, there is great reason to fear that they may be led by our example into the same fault. But there are many ways of giving scandal besides bad example, for instance, when a person induces another to commit sin by his advice or entreaties. And this is a far worse kind of scandal than mere bad example, for by it we become not only the *occasion*, but the direct and wilful *cause* of our neighbour's crime; hence we make ourselves actually answerable for the sins which we have led him to commit, just as if they were our own.

You will, perhaps, understand better what I mean by an example. Let us suppose that a boy in presence of his companions steals an apple from a garden. Another boy, who sees him do it, gets over the hedge and also takes an apple. Here the first boy has given scandal to the other,

and led him to steal by his bad example, but he did not tell him to steal ; perhaps he is even sorry when he sees what his example has led to. But let us suppose that, after he had stolen the apple, he called some of his companions, told them what he had done, and advised them to go and fill their pockets. In this case you see the scandal he has given is of a much worse kind, for he has actually caused them to go and steal through his advice and encouragement. Hence he is answerable for what they have done just as if he had done it himself, and if they do not restore what they have taken, he is bound himself to make good the damage.

The catechism in another part mentions nine ways in which we may be guilty of this worst kind of scandal, namely, by advising, commanding, provoking, or encouraging another to do wrong, by joining in his crime or sharing the fruits of it, by not preventing it when it was our duty to do so, by concealing or defending it. Thus masters are guilty of the sin of scandal who make their servants do servile work on Sundays or holidays without necessity, parents who do not reprove or punish their children when they do wrong, boys who put others up to fight or quarrel, servants who allow their employers to be robbed without trying to prevent it, shopkeepers who buy stolen goods, &c. In all these cases the person who gives the scandal is as bad as, and often worse than he who commits the sin, and has to answer for the consequences of it both to God and man.

Secondly, we are guilty of the sin of scandal in the way of *bad example* when we say or do anything wrong in the presence of others, and this although we may have no intention of leading them into the same sin. For evil example is as catching as fever or small-pox ; and a sin committed in presence of others, especially of children and young people, is but too often the occasion of their falling into a like offence, not perhaps immediately, but in some future moment of temptation. Hence, it follows that the greater the number of those who hear or see us do wrong, the more grievous does our sin become, since more are likely to be injured by our bad example,

and thus by one sin we may be the cause of the ruin of many souls. For this reason, when we go to confession we ought to mention, as nearly as we can, the number of those to whom we have given scandal or bad example. I may add that though these two sins come strictly under the fifth, you will generally find it more convenient to accuse yourselves of them under the other commandments, as the case may be; for instance, if you have to confess missing Mass under the third commandment, you might mention at the same time whether you kept any one else away; if you have to accuse yourselves of speaking bad language under the sixth, you might say how many heard you; and so of the rest.

I need not tell you that scandal and bad example are most grievous sins in the sight of God. For if Almighty God, as we have already seen, regards with such horror any injury inflicted on our neighbour's body, how much more angry will he be at that which is done to his soul! Again, if wilful murder, which destroys the life of the body, be so great a sin, that it is said by God himself to cry out to him in heaven for vengeance, how much more heinous must be the murder of our neighbour's soul, which we are actually guilty of when we draw him into mortal sin! Ah! my dear children, have always the greatest horror of the sin of scandal. Remember that our dear Lord shed the last drop of his Blood for the salvation of that soul which you destroy by leading it into sin. What mercy, then, can you expect from him at the day of Judgment, when he calls you to account for the murder and eternal ruin of that soul which he died to save?

Our B. Redeemer, in warning his disciples against the sin of scandal, speaks in terrible words of those who are guilty of this grievous crime. "Woe," he says, "to the world because of scandal, for it needs must be that scandal come, nevertheless, woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh! He that shall scandalise one of these little ones, it were better for him that a mill-stone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. xviii. 6, 7). Notice these last words of our Lord. It were better, he says, that you



should die a violent and shameful death than scandalise one of his little ones. And why so? Because the death of your body is but a little evil compared with the death of your own and that of your neighbour's soul which you cause by leading him into sin.

Another terrible thought, which should fill us with an extreme horror of the sin of scandal, is that we never know where the evil may stop. Those whom we have led into sin by our encouragement or bad example, may in their turn corrupt others, and these, again, others perhaps yet unborn; so that the measure of the sins committed, in consequence of our first bad act, may never be filled up till the day of judgment. And of all these sins, as far at least as we have or ought to have foreseen them, we shall have to give a strict account to Almighty God. Well might the holy psalmist David, filled with terror at this dreadful thought, cry out earnestly to God to deliver him not only from his own sins, but also from the guilt of those which he had caused others to commit, and which perhaps were hidden from his sight: "From my secret sins cleanse me, O Lord, and from those of others spare thy servant" (Ps. xviii. 13). Alas! my dear children, we have enough sins of our own to answer for without burdening ourselves with the sins of others by giving scandal and bad example.

It sometimes happens that an act good in itself, or at least harmless, may be the occasion of scandal to our neighbour, if, for example, it has the appearance of evil in the eyes of others. This is what is called *the scandal of the weak*, because those who take it show a certain weakness in judging by appearances and not putting, as they ought to do, the best construction on our actions. In these cases it is better for charity's sake not to do the act which may give scandal, unless, indeed, there is some important reason for performing it. Thus, for instance, if you had a dispensation to eat meat on Fridays, but were in company with others to whom it would give scandal, it would be better, in most cases, to abstain from eating it.

There is another kind of scandal, however, which we

are not obliged to avoid; I mean when we do any good act which others, through their own malice and wilful obstinacy, pronounce to be bad, and pretend to be scandalised at. This is the kind of scandal which the Pharisees took at the miracles of our B. Lord, because he healed the sick upon the Sabbath; hence it is usually called *Pharisaical scandal*. Our Lord did not in these cases pay any regard to the scandal which his good actions caused; on the contrary, he reproved the Pharisees for their conduct, and showed them that what they pretended to be tenderness of conscience was in reality nothing better than hypocrisy. (See Matt. xii. 1-13; Luke xiii. 11-16; xiv. 1, &c.) In like manner, those who differ from us in religion often pretend to be scandalised at Catholics because they show respect to sacred images, pray to our B. Lady, wear crucifixes, scapulars, &c. To give up these pious practices simply because others take scandal at them, would not be charity, but weakness and cowardice.

The following example will show you what terrible judgments sometimes fall, even in this life, upon those who are guilty of this grievous sin.

#### SCANDAL AVENGED BY GOD.

Some years ago there lived in one of the villages of France two young men, who disedified the whole neighbourhood by their dissolute conduct. The curé of the parish, finding that his good advice and repeated warnings were treated by them with contempt, addressed himself to their parents, hoping that they would assist him by their authority to bring their sons to a sense of their duty. Instead of doing so, however, they blamed him for interfering in the concerns of their families, and insolently told him that they knew how to bring up their children without his advice. The good priest meekly replied, that whoever despised the advice of his pastor was guilty of an act of contempt against God himself, which certainly would not remain unpunished.

The next day, which was Sunday, was spent as usual by the young men at the public-house, where they openly boasted of their insolence to their pastor, and declared that they set him at defiance. Meanwhile a dreadful thunderstorm gathered in the air, and, bursting over the village, filled every one with terror and consternation. The young libertines, accompanied by two companions, ran to the church tower to sound the consecrated bells, as is usual in Catholic countries on such occasions. While they were thus engaged,

a dreadful peal of thunder resounded through the air immediately above their heads, which filled them with such alarm that they all hastily ran down the steps of the tower to seek some place of greater security. A vivid flash of lightning, however, entering at the same moment by the loopholes of the tower, passed down the stairs as if in pursuit of the fugitives. Descending in a zigzag form, it struck and killed on the spot the second and the fourth of the company, who were the two wicked youths ; their companions escaped without injury. The lightning then descended into the church where the people had begun to assemble, and picking out the mother of one of the young men, dashed her violently against the wall. This awful judgment of God produced the deepest impression upon the guilty parents, who came to the curé with tears in their eyes, to beg pardon for the disrespect they had shown him.—*Instructions of Youth.*

Finally, the fifth commandment not only forbids us to do anything that tends to injure or take away the life either of the body or the soul, it also *commands* us to do all that we can to promote and maintain it. We are commanded, therefore, by this commandment to live at peace with all men, to forgive injuries, to take reasonable care of our own life, to help our neighbour both in his corporal and spiritual necessities, and to set him an example of every Christian virtue. This last is one of the most important duties of fraternal charity, for, as nothing is of greater power in drawing men to evil than the example of the wicked, so nothing has greater effect in leading them to the practice of virtue than the example of the good. Hence our Lord says, "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. v. 16). We must not, indeed, do good *for the sake* of being seen, for this would be vain glory, which our Lord reproves in the Pharisees, telling them that they have already received their reward (see Matt. vi. 1, &c.), but we must do it to please God, who in his Providence will make use of our good actions to edify others, and lead them to the practice of virtue.

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## THIRTY-FIRST INSTRUCTION.

*The Sixth and Ninth Commandments—The grievousness of impurity—What these Commandments forbid—Adultery and all impurity in deed, look, word, thought, or desire—Preservatives against impurity—Sources of impurity—namely, bad company, dangerous amusements, immodest books, love of dress, &c.—Advice in temptation—What these Commandments command.*

Q. What is the Sixth Commandment ?

A. The Sixth Commandment is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Q. What is the Ninth Commandment ?

A. The Ninth Commandment is, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife."

We come now to speak of the sixth commandment, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*, to which we may join the ninth, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife*; for, as these two commandments relate to one and the same subject, they may be explained together. These two commandments are given us by God to preserve us both in mind and body from the shameful sin of impurity. The sixth commandment directs our outward conduct, the ninth regulates the interior of our hearts according to the rules of holy chastity; for, while the sixth commandment forbids us to be guilty of any immodest *word*, or *look*, or *action*, the ninth enjoins us not to allow our *thoughts* to dwell on any unchaste object. Thus you see that God is not satisfied with a mere outward observance of his Law, but, as he is the Creator and Lord of our souls as well as of our bodies, he requires that not only our words and actions, but even our very thoughts and desires, should be innocent and pure.

I need not tell you, my dear children, that the detestable sin of *impurity*, or *lust*, as it is sometimes called, is most heinous in the sight of God. It is one of those seven deadly sins which are mentioned in a later part of the catechism, and which are sometimes called the capital vices, because they are the parents of all other sins.

Impurity consists in the love and indulgence of those sinful pleasures of the flesh which are forbidden alike by our right reason and by the law of God. There is no sin which degrades man more and reduces him more to the level of the beasts than this shameful crime ; for he who, forgetting the noble nature which God has given him and the sublime end for which he has created him, gives himself up as a slave to the passion of lust, is like a senseless beast that, having no knowledge of God or his Divine Law, seeks only its own pleasure and the indulgence of its own appetites. Moreover, the sin of impurity seems of all others the most opposed to the Holiness and Purity of God, which we are bound to imitate as far as we are able, since we are the creatures of God, made to his image, and made for the eternal enjoyment and possession of him. Hence Almighty God said to the Jews in the Old Law, "Be ye holy, because I, the Lord your God, am holy" (Lev. xix. 2). But there is another reason why we are still more strictly bound under the New Law to practise the beautiful virtue of holy purity, and this is because by Baptism our souls and bodies have become the very temple of the Blessed Trinity ; while by Holy Communion and Confirmation they are made the special dwelling-place of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Ghost. Oh, how great must be the sin of him who defiles the temple of God, the dwelling-place of the Son of God and of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Purity, with the filthy abominations of lust ! The Apostle St. Paul, struck with horror at the thought, cries out, "Know ye not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ? But if any man violate the temple of God, him will God destroy. For the temple of God is holy : which ye are" (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17). And again, "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of a harlot ?"—that is, by polluting them with the filthy sin of impurity—"God forbid" (1 Cor. vi. 15). Ah, my dear children, let us have a great horror of this detestable sin which offers so great an outrage to the three Persons of the Adorable Trinity, and which daily fills hell with innumerable

souls. Even in this life there is, perhaps, no crime which draws down upon those who are guilty of it more signal chastisements. Witness the whole of mankind, one family excepted, swept away by the waters of the deluge ; witness Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed by a rain from heaven of fire and brimstone ; witness the terrible diseases, the premature death, which are so frequently the dismal consequences of this shameful vice. And yet these temporal punishments are as nothing compared to the eternal torments which await the impure in the world to come.

Q. What does the Sixth Commandment forbid ?

A. The Sixth Commandment forbids all sins of impurity with another's wife or husband.

Q. What other sins are forbidden by the Sixth Commandment ?

A. The Sixth Commandment forbids whatever is contrary to holy purity, in looks, words, or actions.

Q. What does the Ninth Commandment forbid ?

A. The Ninth Commandment forbids all wilful consent to impure thoughts and desires, and all wilful pleasure in the irregular motions of the flesh.

These three answers tell us what the chief sins are which are forbidden by the sixth and ninth commandments. For when Almighty God says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," and "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife," he does not forbid merely the sin of adultery and the desire of that sin, but also every thought, or word, or look, or deed, that is contrary to the holy virtue of purity ; just in the same way as when he says, "Thou shalt not kill," in the fifth commandment, he forbids not only murder, but all that tends to lead to the commission of that crime.

The sin of *adultery*, which is the first mentioned, and under which we include *all sins of impurity with another's wife or husband*, is one of the most grievous acts of impurity of which man can be guilty. It is most grievous not only because it is so contrary to the sanctity of the married state, but also because it is a crying injustice to our neighbour, since it wrongs him in a most tender point by violating the fidelity which husband and wife have mutually pledged to each other. Hence it is a crime of which

Almighty God in the Old Law speaks in the most severe terms, ordering those who were guilty of it to be put to death without mercy, that so great an evil might be taken away from the midst of the people (Lev. xx. 10; Deut. xxii. 22). It is true that our B. Lord in the New Law would not allow the adulterous woman to be stoned to death, according to the custom of the Jews; but this was not because her sin did not deserve death, but to reprove the Pharisees for their hypocrisy, and to show that he had come to seek and to save the lost sheep, and would never refuse to receive back the poor sinner if truly penitent (John viii. 3-11).

We must not, however, think that adultery or the desire of it are the only mortal sins which we can commit against these two commandments. On the contrary, *whatever is contrary to holy purity, whether in looks, words, or actions* is, if fully consented to, grievous in the sight of God, and brings eternal death to the soul. Hence the Apostle says, "Know ye this and understand, that no fornicator or unclean person hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Ephes. v. 5). And again, "The works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, &c.; of the which I foretell you, as I have foretold you, that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of heaven" (Gal. v. 19, 21). You see that St. Paul here plainly tells us that no unclean person, that is, who is guilty of any sin of impurity, shall ever enter into eternal life. From which we may gather, that all indecent liberties either with ourselves or others, all unchaste looks, immodest talk, impure thoughts and desires, are, *if fully and deliberately consented to*, mortal sins, which grievously offend God, and, unless they are blotted out by a sincere repentance, deprive us of the hope of heaven, and condemn us to the eternal torments of hell.

Take notice, also, my dear children, that in confessing any sin against the sixth and ninth commandments it is not sufficient to accuse yourselves of impurity in general, but it is necessary to mention the very sin you have committed; for example, whether it was by look, by word,

by deed, by desire, &c. For a sin of look differs in kind from a sin of speech, and both of them differ from sins of action and from sins of thought or desire. Again, it is necessary to confess whether a bad action was done by oneself or with another, and if with another, whether that person was of the same or of the other sex—whether single, married, a relation, &c.; for all these circumstances change the nature of the sin. In like manner it is necessary to say how many persons we have scandalised by our bad example or wicked conversation. Sometimes young people, through a false shame or fear, try to pass over the sins they have committed against these commandments as lightly as possible. For example, they will say they have had thoughts, when they have not only *had* them but have consented to them, and perhaps even committed impure actions as well. Again, they will accuse themselves of speaking bad words, which may mean anything, instead of saying that they have been guilty of talking immodestly, and before how many people. Others, perhaps, say nothing at all about these sins; they are possessed by a dumb devil, who keeps their mouths shut. They go through their little daily offences very exactly, but say nothing about the great loathsome wound of impurity that is festering in their hearts. In so doing they are guilty of a grievous sacrilege, for they trample on the Blood of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of Penance by receiving it unworthily. Moreover, they tell a lie to the Holy Ghost, and heap upon their own souls a heavy burden of sin, which will one day weigh them down to the bottom of the abyss. Alas, how many souls does not the devil thus lure on to their eternal ruin! Whenever, therefore, you come to Confession, earnestly implore the grace of God and the assistance of our B. Lady and your good Angel, that you may have not only light to know your sins, but courage to accuse yourselves of them with humility and perfect sincerity. If you find extreme difficulty in confessing any sin, ask the priest to assist you, for he will understand and know how to compassionate your weakness.

The following history will show you how the sin of



impurity serves to harden the heart and render the soul deaf to the voice of Divine grace.

#### THE BLEEDING CRUCIFIX.

It is related in the life of St. Francis Borgia that a certain Spanish gentleman, who was addicted to the sin of impurity, was stricken in the flower of his age by a mortal distemper. St. Francis, having heard of the circumstance, was inspired by a holy zeal to make every effort to bring him to a sense of his sad condition and move him to repentance. Before going to visit him, he first went and threw himself at the foot of the crucifix, earnestly beseeching God to bless his endeavours and grant him the salvation of this unhappy soul. "Go," said our B. Lord to him interiorly, "go to the sick man and exhort him to repentance. I promise you that my grace shall not be wanting." St. Francis set out on his errand of charity, and obtained admittance to the sick man's bedside. In moving terms he represented to him the sad condition of his soul, and exhorted him to make his peace with God by a good confession; but at the mention of confession the dying man turned away, and declared that he would never consent to it. St. Francis returned home, and again throwing himself before the crucifix, earnestly implored our Divine Lord to soften the hardened heart of the sinner. "Return to him," replied Jesus, "and take with thee the crucifix. Can he resist the sight of a God dead on the cross for his salvation?" The saint immediately went back to the dying man, and showing him the crucifix, urged him in burning words to repent and confess his sins, placing all his trust in the Mercy of a God who had shed the last drop of his Blood upon the cross in order to save him. At the same moment, by a prodigy of grace, the sacred image appeared torn with wounds and covered with blood. Alas! the hardened sinner still remained insensible to the voice of Divine grace. Having cast one look upon the crucifix, he turned to the wall and died in despair.—*Life of St Francis Borgia.*

In order, my dear children, that we may preserve our souls from the detestable stain of impurity, it is necessary that we should keep a constant guard over our senses—that is, over our eyes, our tongue, our ears, &c.,—which are, as it were, the doors by which the unclean spirit enters into our hearts. How often does it happen that an unguarded glance, some unbecoming story listened to with pleasure, or a too great freedom of behaviour, is the beginning of some terrible fall, and even of the eternal damnation of the soul! The devil is always watching for some opportunity of tempting

us, knowing well the weakness of our corrupt nature ; we ought, therefore, to be always on our guard, ever watchful and prudent. Holy Job tells us that he made a covenant—that is an agreement—with his eyes never to think of any dangerous object, for he well knew that if he did not keep his eyes from dangerous looks, he could never preserve his heart from impure thoughts and desires (Job xxxi. 1). Hence our B. Lord himself tells us that “who-soever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt. v. 28). Witness the sad example of King David, who, though before so innocent and beloved of God, was led, by looking curiously at a woman who was bathing, into the double crime of adultery and murder. It was, on the contrary, by observing a continual watchfulness over their eyes and other senses that a St. Aloysius, a St. Stanislaus, &c., became like very angels upon earth in their spotless purity. Imitate, my dear children, their bright example, and if ever your eyes rest by chance on any dangerous object, turn them away at once and say some short prayer in your heart to our dear Lord or his B. Mother. Listen to what happened to the great St. Bernard.

#### ST. BERNARD'S VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION.

It is related of St. Bernard, that on one occasion he allowed his eyes to rest for a short time with some degree of curiosity on a person of the other sex. Although he was not conscious of anything more than a passing curiosity, he had no sooner reflected on his fault than he was touched with remorse on considering the danger he had run, and severely reproached himself for his indiscretion. Whereupon, to punish himself for this fault, as well as by way of remedy for the future, he ran at once to a pool of water, and, though it was the depth of winter, cast himself into the half-frozen pond, where he remained so long, that the natural heat of his body was well-nigh extinguished by the cold. This generous act was well rewarded by God, who from that moment not only extinguished in him all motions of concupiscence, but bestowed upon him the gift of that tender and ardent love of Jesus and Mary which breathes forth in all his words and writings.—*Life of St. Bernard.*

We must not, however, be contented with watching over our *eyes* that they may not rest on dangerous objects ; we must use a like vigilance as regards the *tongue* that it

may not utter, and as regards the *ears* that they may not listen to any indecent word or expression. What can be more unworthy of a Christian than that the tongue, which is made to sing for ever the praises of God, and which is consecrated with the Blood of Jesus Christ in the Holy Communion, should be polluted with filthy and obscene language? And what can be more dangerous to the soul than that the ears, by which wicked thoughts so easily enter into the heart, should be open to the voice of the devil, speaking the foul language of hell by the mouths of his children? For those who are in the habit of speaking immodest talk are truly the children of the devil, since they are continually employed in his work of corrupting and destroying souls. Avoid carefully the company of those who give way to this detestable habit, for depend upon it, if you go with them you will soon become as wicked and as shameless as they are. If you hear any immodest word by accident, or among those in whose company you are obliged to work, turn a deaf ear to it, and raise your heart by some short prayer to Jesus or your B. Mother. Often it is well to begin to speak of some other subject, by which you both show your dislike of such wicked talk and are able to prevent our dear Lord from being offended.

I cannot, my dear children, impress upon you too strongly the necessity of avoiding all *evil companions*, if you wish to preserve the precious treasure of holy purity. Alas, how many are there now in hell who owe their eternal damnation to the bad advice or wicked example of some false friend, whom they now curse as the author of their ruin! Our B. Lord, to show us the absolute necessity of avoiding all bad company and, indeed, every occasion of sin, however near and dear it may be to us, says, "If thy hand or thy foot scandalise thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to go into life maimed or lame, than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thy eye scandalise thee, cut it out and cast it from thee. It is better for thee having one eye to enter into life, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire" (Matt. xviii. 8, 9). Learn from

these words of our Lord to make any sacrifice, however much it may cost you, to keep out of bad company and the occasion of sin. If you have a friend or companion, who is as dear to you as your eye, or your foot, or your hand, but who is, or who is likely to be, an occasion of sin to you, shun him as you would the devil himself. It is better for you to go without him into eternal life, than to be condemned along with him to everlasting torments.

Listen and I will now relate to you some examples, which will show you on the one hand the fatal consequences of a want of vigilance and firmness in keeping away from bad companions, and on the other the blessings with which God rewards those who are faithful in shunning such dangerous occasions.

#### THE ISRAELITES AND THE MADIANITES.

When the Israelites were on the point of entering the promised land, Almighty God strictly commanded them to avoid all communication with the wicked inhabitants of that country. "Beware," said he, "thou never join in friendship with the inhabitants of the land, which may be thy ruin. Thou shalt not enter into league with them. Let them not dwell in thy land, lest perhaps they make thee sin against me" (Exod. xxxiv. 12 ; xxiii. 32, 33). Unmindful of the Divine commandment, the Israelites allowed the Madianite women to enter their camp, and were seduced by them into the commission of grievous sin—the double sin of fornication and idolatry. Upon this occasion a terrible punishment was inflicted both on the Israelites and their seducers. Of the former, twenty-four thousand were slain by the hand of God ; while the Madianites, as the authors of the evil, were almost utterly exterminated at the Divine command by the swords of the Israelites (Numb. xxv., xxxi.) Almighty God then repeated his command to the Jews in the strongest terms, warning them of the terrible consequences which would ensue in case they disobeyed him. "Destroy," said he, "all the inhabitants of that land. But if you will not kill the inhabitants of the land, they that remain shall be unto you as nails in your eyes and spears in your sides. And whatever I had thought to do to them, I will do to you" (Numb. xxxiii. 52, 55).

#### JOSEPH, A MODEL OF CHASTITY.

When the holy patriarch Joseph had been sold by his brethren as a slave and carried into Egypt, his innocent and virtuous life gained for him the confidence of his master Putiphar, who raised him to the office of his steward, and entrusted him with the charge of his entire household. In this position the holy youth was exposed

to a great temptation, for his mistress being carried away by a guilty passion, sought his consent to a grievous sin. Joseph was struck with horror at the proposal, and declared that he would never be guilty of so heinous an offence against God and so great an act of ingratitude to his master. The wicked woman, however, persisted in her efforts, and one day finding him alone, caught hold of his garment and pressed him to consent. The prudent youth knowing well that flight is the best security in moments of temptation, ran away from her presence leaving his garment in her hands. Here-upon his mistress, blinded with rage and the desire of revenge, raised a loud cry, and having alarmed the household, accused Joseph of having offered violence to her, producing his cloak as a proof of the truth of her story. On this false charge the virtuous youth was cast into prison, where he remained a long time in confinement. But "the Lord," says the Holy Scripture, "was with Joseph, and gave him favour in the sight of the chief keeper of the prison, and made all that he did to prosper" (Genesis xxxix.)

### "WOE TO MY SEDUCER."

A certain student in one of the French colleges, who had always been remarkable for his virtuous life and sincere piety, had the misfortune to fall into the company of a depraved youth, whose wicked conversation and loose behaviour soon served to corrupt his soul and rob him of the treasure of his innocence. Having once fallen, he plunged deeper and deeper into sin, until at length a sudden and alarming illness came to interrupt his course of crime. In this extremity his friends spoke to him about his soul, and exhorted him to make his peace with God, but an obstinate and gloomy silence was his only answer. Soon after, waking up one night from his sleep, he began to fill the house with frightful cries. His attendants ran to his bedside and asked him the cause of his alarm, but they could obtain no answer. The priest was at once sent for, who came without delay, and earnestly exhorted him to think of God and beg pardon for his sins, but all in vain. Still the good priest continued to encourage him with many moving considerations to hope in the Divine Mercy, when suddenly the dying youth turned to him with a ghastly look, and in a voice of terror exclaimed, "Woe to my seducer! woe to my seducer! It is in vain for me to hope for pardon, for I see hell open to receive me." So saying, he fell back and died in despair.—*John Gerson.*

### TEMPTATION OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS.

St. Thomas of Aquin, who, on account of his exceeding purity and sublime learning, is surnamed the *angelic doctor*, was inspired in his youth with the desire of devoting himself to the service of God in the Order of St. Dominic, but had to undergo the most formidable opposition from his friends and family. Among other artifices they sought to undermine his virtue, in order that having

once fallen into mortal sin he might abandon the worship of God in disgust. With this view they one evening introduced a wicked woman into his chamber, promising her a considerable sum of money if she succeeded in seducing him into sin. No sooner, however, had she entered the apartment than the holy youth, overcome with horror, snatched from the fire a burning brand, and, calling on God for assistance, drove her contemptuously from the room. Then, falling on his knees, he with many tears thanked God for his deliverance, and implored him to give him grace never to forfeit the precious jewel of his purity. At the same time, he consecrated himself once more to the service of God by renewing his vow of perpetual chastity. Soon after he fell into a deep slumber, during which he beheld two Angels approach his bedside and gird him about the loins with a cord, to signify his deliverance from all impure temptations, with which he was never afterwards molested.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

Q. What ought we to think of immodest plays and dances?

A. Immodest plays and dances are forbidden by the Sixth Commandment; and it is sinful to look at them.

Q. Does this Commandment forbid immodest songs, books, and pictures?

A. Yes; the Sixth Commandment forbids immodest songs, books, and pictures, because they are most dangerous to the soul, and lead to mortal sin.

We come now to speak of certain other fruitful sources of impurity which we are bound by the sixth commandment to avoid. Among these the catechism mentions in a special manner *immodest plays and dances*, telling us that *they are forbidden by this commandment, and that it is sinful to look at them*. What indeed can be more dangerous to the purity of the soul than to witness the representation of conduct which is in itself sinful, or to take part in amusements which inflame the passions, and are calculated to fill the heart with impure affections and the mind with sinful imaginations! The play-house and the dancing-room are, indeed, too often the schools of Satan, where the souls of the young and innocent are robbed of the fresh bloom of holy purity, and become gradually corrupted and hardened in vice. How many a young girl, first led by curiosity or seduced by evil companions, has entered these abodes of sin under the pretence of innocent amusement, and though at first shocked at the unbecoming jests and bold and shameless behaviour of

those around her, has in a short time been carried away by the excitement of the dance or the play, and learnt before the close of the evening to laugh at and enjoy, nay to take part in, that at which she had at first blushed! Again and again does she return to throw herself into the danger, each time her heart becomes more hardened to grace, her passions more inflamed, until she finishes by forming some wicked connection which ends in her shame and her ruin. And how many an innocent youth is first seduced in these haunts of vice into some grievous sin, which is the beginning of a long career of profligacy and crime! Such, alas! is the true history of the greater part of those who frequent the low play-house, or the singing or dancing saloon. And no wonder, since God himself has expressly warned us that "he that loveth danger shall perish in it" (Ecclus. iii. 27). No, my dear children, God will not work a miracle of grace to preserve those from sin who willingly and knowingly place themselves in the occasion of it. Be always firm, therefore, in resisting every invitation to visit such dangerous resorts. It is better to bear with the scoffs and jeers of false friends, than to lose your innocence and incur the terrible anger of the Almighty.

The great St. Augustine has handed down to us the sad example of a young man who, by a weak compliance in remaining at a sinful spectacle, was not only corrupted himself but became the corrupter of others.

#### ALIPIUS AT THE ROMAN SPORTS.

Alipius, who was a bosom friend of St. Augustine, was in his youth much opposed to the cruel games and criminal amusements of the Roman amphitheatre. Frequently was he solicited by his friends to accompany them to these sinful spectacles, but he always steadily refused. One day, however, they would take no refusal, but, holding him in a friendly way by the arms, led him to the amphitheatre, where the games were about to commence. "What matter," said he, "if you drag my body with you! You cannot compel me to fix my eyes or my thoughts upon the shows."

Wrapped in a fatal security, Alipius took his seat by the side of his companions. At first he resolutely closed his eyes, and refused to gaze for a moment on the cruel sports. "Would to God," says St. Augustine, "that he had closed his ears also!" A loud shout

arose from the spectators, and Alipius, impelled by curiosity, opened his eyes to ascertain the cause. "Immediately he was struck," adds the Saint, "with a more grievous wound of the soul than the gladiator, whom he desired to behold, had received in the body. What more shall I say ! He continued to gaze, he shouted like the rest, he was inflamed with excitement, and carried away with him a mad passion, which impelled him not only to return again himself, but to draw others along with him."—*St. August. Confess.* vi. 8.

#### HUBERT AND LOUIS.

In a small town in France lived a young man named Hubert, whose piety and good conduct were an example to all persons of his age. It happened on one occasion that a public entertainment, accompanied with fireworks, dancing, and other amusements, was given in a neighbouring village, and Hubert took a walk in that direction by way of recreation. On his way he was joined by a young man named Louis, who was noted in the country for his immorality and impiety. Hubert, instead of making a civil excuse for quitting his company, weakly allowed himself to be drawn into conversation, and after they had talked for some time on in different subjects, Louis, following up his advantage, began to rally his friend on his piety, and to paint to him the pleasures of a gay life in glowing colours. Hubert at first felt some displeasure at his conversation, but continuing to listen, he began to be ashamed of what his companion called a want of knowledge of the world. Having arrived at the fair, he was introduced by Louis to several wicked associates, and after visiting together the principal objects of attraction, the whole party entered into one of the booths to refresh themselves with wine. Heated with liquor, and inflamed by the wicked conversation of his companions, Hubert yielded to the tempter, joined in their dissolute conversation, and was led on to the commission of a still more grievous sin. Scarcely had he thus offended his God, when part of the building, which had been erected for the occasion, gave way, and the unhappy youth was buried beneath the ruins.

Louis, who escaped, was so touched with remorse at the untimely fate of Hubert, that he entered shortly after into a neighbouring monastery, and spent the remainder of his life in the practice of the most severe penance. Until the day when he was seized with his last illness, as often as the monks entered in procession into the church, he prostrated himself before the door, that they might step over him, and repeated the following words, "Beg of God to have mercy on a poor wretch who once destroyed the soul of a brother."—*Mrs. Herbert.*

The catechism next goes on to speak of *immodest songs, books, and pictures*, all of which it declares to be *most dangerous to the soul*, and the fruitful cause of innumer-



able *mortal sins*. As to the singers of immodest songs, they are, indeed, the most able helpmates of the devil in his work of destroying souls, and for each unhappy soul to whom they have given scandal, they will have to give a separate account at the throne of the most Just Judge. With respect to immodest books and pictures, it is always a sin knowingly to read a book, or look with curiosity at a picture, which is calculated to fill the mind with impure thoughts, and to expose us to the danger of offending God. Among books of this nature we may include not only those which are absolutely indecent, but those also which treat of impure love and which tend to inflame the passions. Such, alas ! is the case with a great part of modern novels and romances, as well as with many of the cheap weekly and monthly magazines. The writers of these works seek nothing else but their own gain, and as man is more inclined to evil than to good, they pander to the vicious and morbid taste of the multitude in order to obtain a greater sale. Even the very newspapers are often full of accounts of abominable crimes, the very mention of which should make us blush, and of which the Apostle says, that they should not so much as be named among Christians (Eph. v. 3). Amid this universal corruption how necessary it is, my dear children, that you should exercise the greatest vigilance as to what you read ! In regard to this, your parents and your confessor will be your best advisers. Consult them in all cases of doubt, and never ask or accept the loan of a book unless you know that it is one which you can read with safety. I would also advise you to read such books as will not only entertain but improve the mind, for example, books of history, travels, &c., also Catholic magazines and stories, which generally contain some instruction or useful moral lesson. The constant reading of novels and love tales, even of those which have in them nothing immoral, cannot but serve to weaken the mind and unfit it for serious pursuits, besides often exciting the passions, and filling the head with foolish and dangerous imaginations. We have a remarkable instance of the evil effects of such reading in the person of the great St. Teresa.

## DANGEROUS TEMPTATION OF ST. TERESA.

St. Teresa was brought up by her virtuous parents in the practice of fervent piety. At a very early age she took great delight in reading the Lives of the Saints, the perusal of which strongly incited her to the imitation of their virtues, so that she grew up a perfect model of goodness and piety. At the age of twelve she lost her excellent mother, and about the same time fell into the dangerous habit of reading love tales and romances, in which she was encouraged by a young cousin, who had come upon a visit to her father's house, and who was much addicted to such reading. Every day the young Teresa gave a greater portion of her time to the perusal of these dangerous books, and, consequently, had less to devote to study, prayer, and useful employment. The consequence was, that in a short time she became idle, worldly, and fond of dress, and would, no doubt, have fallen deeper, had not her father, perceiving the change which her dispositions had undergone, placed her in a convent of Augustinian nuns, where, removed from the occasion of sin, she after a time recovered her former fervour. She often thanked God in after life for delivering her from so great a peril, and in her writings she warns all parents to guard their children carefully against such dangerous reading, which had well-nigh proved the instrument of her own ruin.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

Another fatal source of impurity among young women especially, is that *excessive love of dress* which is frequently their ruling passion. This dangerous propensity springs from a foolish vanity; they long to be admired, and fancy that gay ribbons, showy frocks and smart hats will set them off to advantage, and secure for them the admiration they covet. They forget that modesty and simplicity, both in dress and behaviour, are the most beautiful ornaments of the female sex. Eliezer was more pleased with Rebecca in the simple garb of a shepherdess, carrying her empty pitcher on her shoulder to the well, than if she had been decked out in showy and costly garments. And so it is; those who rely upon dress as a means of pleasing, may, indeed, secure the flattery and dangerous attentions of the dissolute and designing, but they will never obtain the love and esteem of the sensible and virtuous. How often, alas! does it happen that girls whose heads are turned by this foolish passion for dress, fall an easy prey to the seducer, who well knows how to obtain an influence over them by flattery and false promises. It is,

indeed, to this silly vanity and love of finery that many poor unhappy girls can trace their shame and their ruin. Do you then, Christian mothers, do your best, both by word and example, to preserve your daughters from so dangerous a passion. Dress them always with simplicity and in a manner becoming their station, and teach them that true beauty does not consist in smart clothes or in a pretty face, but in a pure and innocent soul, and in modest, amiable, and gentle manners. And do you girls, when you grow up and begin to earn for yourselves, spend your earnings not in what is showy and gaudy, but in what is useful and lasting, and, moreover, suited to your state and employment. Lay by, too, what you can for a *rainy day*, that is, to help you when you happen to be sick or out of employment. Above all, do not forget that it is your duty, when your parents grow old and infirm, to assist them to the utmost of your power, and to devote a portion of your earnings to procuring for them the help and comforts that they require.

Finally, it is our duty not only to watch over our senses and to avoid those occasions which lead to the sin of impurity, but also to *guard our thoughts* from dwelling on any unchaste or dangerous object. For immodest thoughts freely indulged in soon lead to impure desires, and these, again, to the actual commission of the sin. We cannot, indeed, help being tempted with bad thoughts, for the devil, who is, as our Lord tells us, an "unclean spirit" (Mark v. 8, &c.), is never weary of filling our minds with his filthy imaginations, in order to rob us, if possible, of the inestimable treasure of holy purity. All that God requires of us is not to listen to the tempter, but to put away at once his wicked suggestions. And how can we do this? By thinking of some good thought, such as the presence of God, the hour of our death, the torments of hell, or the sufferings of our Lord, and by raising our hearts to God with some short prayer. "O Lord, save me or I perish; Jesus and Mary, help me; my good Angel, assist me;" these or such like aspirations will be sure to draw down from heaven the grace which we require. It is also very useful to wear about our necks some blessed cross or

medal, to kiss it in time of temptation, to sprinkle ourselves with holy water, to make the sign of the cross, &c. Above all, we often should go to confession and receive Holy Communion. As long as we make use of such means to overcome temptation, the devil will have no power to hurt us, and all his efforts will but increase our crown. Almighty God often allows us to be tempted for our greater spiritual good, in order that, being made sensible of our own wretchedness, we may become more humble and watchful, and that, by our fervent prayers and generous resistance, we may merit a greater reward. The Saints themselves, during their mortal life, were not free from such temptations, but they became Saints by manfully overcoming them. Even the great Apostle St. Paul tells us that he was grievously tempted with a sting of the flesh for his greater humiliation and spiritual profit. "Lest the greatness of the revelations," he says, "should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me. For which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me. And he said to me, *My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in infirmity*" (2 Cor. xii. 7-9). You see that God did not grant the prayer of the Apostle for deliverance from the temptation, but gave him grace to resist it. Thus was the Divine Power more clearly manifested and the virtue of the Apostle more solidly established. Do not, therefore, be discouraged if the temptation still continues to trouble you after you have prayed fervently against it. Only be faithful to God's grace by continuing to fight bravely, and he, who witnesses your combat, will not fail to reward it, and to turn all to your greater good. God is never wanting to those who trust in him, as you will see from the following examples.

#### SUSANNA AND THE ELDERS.

During the time of the Captivity there lived among the Jews at Babylon a certain rich man named Joakim, whose wife Susanna was distinguished no less for her extraordinary beauty than for her admirable virtue and piety. Now it happened that two of the ancients of the people, who held that year the office of judges, con-

ceived an impure affection for her, and eagerly sought some opportunity to gratify their passion. Accordingly one day when she went down to bathe in her husband's orchard, and had dismissed her maids, they suddenly presented themselves before her and solicited her to the commission of a grievous crime, threatening, in case of her refusal, to accuse her before her husband and the whole people as an adulteress. Whereupon the chaste Susanna, calling to mind in this her cruel temptation the all-seeing presence of God, exclaimed with a sigh, "I am straitened on every side, for if I do this thing, it is death to me, and if I do it not, I shall not escape your hands. But it is better for me to fall into your hands without doing it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord." Having said this she cried out loudly for assistance, but the wicked elders called out still more loudly, declaring that they had found her in company with a young man, who, on perceiving their approach, had escaped by flight.

On the following day the innocent Susanna was summoned to the tribunal and publicly accused of the grievous crime of adultery. Upon the testimony of the two elders she was found guilty, and condemned to be stoned to death; but God, who never deserts his faithful servants, sent her a deliverer in the person of the prophet Daniel. This holy youth, who was then but a boy, though endowed with supernatural wisdom and discernment, meeting her as she was being led to execution, cried out with a loud voice, "I am clear from the blood of this woman. Return to judgment, for they have borne false witness against her." Hereupon the execution was stayed, and Daniel was invited to take his seat with the ancients of the people. By his directions the two elders were separated, and questioned apart as to the circumstances of the crime which they had witnessed. The one declared that it had been committed under a mastic tree, while the other asserted that it had taken place under the shade of an oak; upon which manifest contradiction Susanna was triumphantly acquitted, and the two false witnesses were executed in her stead (Daniel xiii.)

#### TEMPTATIONS OF ST. CATHERINE OF SIENNA.

St. Catherine of Sienna, that favourite spouse of our B. Lord, who bore in her body the stigmata or marks of the Sacred Wounds, was at one time of her life subject to the most violent temptations of Satan. That wicked spirit, envious of the angelic purity of her soul, was wont to fill her mind with filthy imaginations, and to assail her heart with the most impure temptations. Unceasingly did she call on God for help, but she seemed to receive no answer. Her mind was obscured with frightful darkness, and she seemed on the very brink of the precipice. Often, indeed, she was unable to distinguish between temptation and consent, but an invisible hand always preserved her from falling. Upon one occasion after her temptations had ceased, our B. Lord came to visit her, filling her with heavenly consolations. "Ah, my Divine Spouse," she cried

out, "where wast thou when I lay in such an abandoned and frightful condition?" "I was with thee," he replied. "What," said she, "in the midst of the filthy abominations with which my soul was filled?" "Yes," answered our Lord, "for these temptations were most displeasing and painful to thee. By fighting against them thou hast gained immense merit, and the victory was owing to my presence." Thus did St. Catherine learn that God is never nearer to us than when we appear the most abandoned, and that he is never wanting to those who call upon him with humility and confidence.—*Butler's Saints' Lives*.

Q. What sins commonly cause the breaking of the Ninth Commandment?

A. The sins which commonly cause the breaking of the Ninth Commandment are idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, and intemperance.

These four vices, my dear children, *idleness, gluttony, drunkenness* and *intemperance*, inasmuch as they greatly weaken and corrupt the soul, are, as the catechism tells us, so many fruitful sources of the detestable sin of impurity. As, however, they are treated of in another part of the catechism, we will pass them over for the present, and I will only exhort you to have a special love for the practice of the opposite virtues of diligence and temperance, which will greatly assist you in acquiring the lovely and amiable virtue of holy purity. On the contrary, long experience proves that sloth, intemperance and impurity, are like three sisters who are almost always found in each other's company.

In conclusion, we are *commanded* by the sixth and ninth commandments to be decent and modest in all our thoughts, words, looks and actions, and carefully to preserve that purity of mind and body, which is the greatest treasure and most beautiful ornament of man.

## THIRTY-SECOND INSTRUCTION.

*The Seventh Commandment. What it forbids—First, the unjust taking away of what belongs to another; Secondly, the unjust keeping of our neighbour's goods—Obligation of restitution. The Tenth Commandment. What it forbids—What these two Commandments command.*

**Q.** What is the Seventh Commandment?

**A.** The Seventh Commandment is, "Thou shalt not steal."

**Q.** What is the Tenth Commandment?

**A.** The Tenth Commandment is, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods."

The seventh and tenth commandments, my dear children, may be explained together for the same reason as the sixth and ninth—namely, because they both treat of the same subject. The one forbids us to *steal*, the other to *covet*, the goods of our neighbour; in other words, the one forbids all *acts* and the other all *thoughts and desires* which tend to deprive our fellow-man of his lawful possessions. God has given us these two commandments to secure to us the use and peaceful possession of the temporal goods which he has bestowed upon us. For whatever man has, is from God, though it may appear to us the fruit of his own labour and industry, or the result of chance, as people sometimes foolishly say, forgetting that there is no such thing as chance in the world, but that everything is ruled and directed by the all-seeing Providence of God. *He* it is who gives to man the health, the strength, the ability, the opportunity to earn, and it is His Providence which ordains that one should be born of poor and another of wealthy parents. Therefore whatever man has is the gift of God, who bestows on one more, on another less, according to his own wise designs. The goods of this world are so many talents entrusted to us by God to be employed for His honour and the good of our fellow-men, and every one will have to give a strict account of the manner in which he has employed them. From this you see the particular hatefulness of the sin of theft, which is a rebellion against God's Providence, and an effort to over-

turn the order which he has established. The thief declares, not in words but by his deeds, that it shall not be as God has ordained; he usurps to himself what God has given to his neighbour. By so doing he not only inflicts a grievous wrong on his fellow-man whom he deprives of what is justly his, but also offers an extreme outrage to God in resisting his appointments, and violating the first principles of justice, which is one of the most admirable perfections of the Almighty. Hence the Apostle declares that both theft and covetousness are most grievous sins, and such as will exclude us for ever from the kingdom of heaven. "Do not err," says he to us, "neither idolaters, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor extortioners, shall possess the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10).

**Q.** What does the Seventh Commandment forbid?

**A.** The Seventh Commandment forbids all unjust taking away, or keeping what belongs to another.

**Q.** What else is forbidden by the Seventh Commandment?

**A.** All manner of cheating in buying and selling, or any other way of wronging our neighbour, is forbidden by the Seventh Commandment.

**Q.** Is it dishonest for servants to waste their master's time or property?

**A.** Yes; it is dishonest for servants to waste their master's time or property, because it is wasting what is not their own.

We come now to speak of the sins which are forbidden by these two commandments. And first, as regards the seventh, the catechism says that it forbids *all unjust taking away or keeping what belongs to another*. Under these two general headings are comprised all the various sins of dishonesty which are here forbidden. Notice, however, that the catechism only speaks of the *unjust* taking away or keeping of our neighbour's goods, for it may happen that a person may *justly* be deprived or kept out of the use and enjoyment of what belongs to him. Take for example the case of a person who has broken some public law, for which he is liable to pay a fine to the State. If he refuses, the money may be taken from him by the public officers in the manner which the law prescribes. Take, again, the case of a madman who demands from his friends possession of some deadly weapon which belongs to him,



but which he would probably use for his own destruction. Not only may it lawfully be kept from him, but it would even be a sin to place it in his hands. In these and such like instances no sin is committed in taking or detaining what belongs to another; but in all other cases we are strictly forbidden by the seventh commandment to deprive our neighbour of what God has given him, or to keep him from the possession of it. Let us now see what are the principal ways in which we may commit this injustice.

First of all, those are guilty in the highest degree of unjustly taking away what belongs to another, who are guilty of *theft accompanied by violence*; for example, those who knock down people and rob them, who break into and plunder houses, who by threats of personal violence extort money from the timid and feeble. This kind of robbery is more grievous than ordinary sins of theft, on account of the violence employed, and the terror, anxiety, or personal injury caused to the person who is plundered. Hence the punishment inflicted by the law on those who commit these crimes is usually far more severe than that which is enjoined in cases of simple dishonesty.

Another species of theft which carries with it a special guilt is that which is *accompanied with a breach of confidence*. For example, a master entrusts to one of his servants a sum of money for some particular purpose, or puts certain goods under his charge. Now the servant, seeing the confidence which the master places in him, takes advantage of it to pilfer the money or make away with the goods for his own profit. A shopkeeper sends round one of his men whom he considers trustworthy to collect the accounts due to him. The collector, however, is a rogue, who keeps back part of the money paid, or, like the unjust steward in the Gospel, knocks off a portion of the bills for the sake of a gift, or in hopes of some future advantage. A servant girl is sent by her mistress to purchase some goods. She does not go to the shop where she can make the best bargain, but where she is likely to receive a gift from the dealer in return for her custom—a bribe which her mistress will have to pay for by the increased charge made in the bill or the inferior

value of the goods purchased. Again, a cook happens to have some friends or relations whom she goes to visit, and to whom she takes the dripping or scraps of meat which she can get together without her mistress's permission or knowledge. Perhaps she is misled by a mistaken charity to the poor, and gives half a loaf to one, a little tea or sugar to another, and the remains of a joint of meat to a third, without ever asking her mistress's consent. She says, "Oh, it will never be missed!" or, "Surely the mistress can well afford it!" but she forgets that to give alms at another's expense is not charity, but theft. Or perhaps it is the housemaid, who disposes of the cast-off clothes, which she finds lying about, to some travelling pedlar in exchange for a smart ribbon or a few pence. Again, a servant man is hired for a certain sum to work for a fixed time, or to perform certain duties. Instead of setting industriously to his work, he wastes his time and neglects the duties he has undertaken to perform, or does them in an imperfect and slovenly manner. My dear children, let us not deceive ourselves, all these are sins of dishonesty; and though they vary in enormity in proportion to the amount of injury inflicted on the employer, yet they have all a special guilt of their own, on account of the abuse of that confidence which is placed by every master or mistress in those who are engaged in their service. Hence sins of theft committed by servants, like those which are accompanied with violence, are usually punished with greater severity by human laws.

The third kind of dishonesty of which we may be guilty is *simple theft* without violence or abuse of confidence. For example, there are some who get their livelihood by stealing from open shops or by picking pockets; others by robbing gardens, market stalls, or ships' cargoes; others, again, by stripping clothes-lines or taking whatever they find lying about exposed and unprotected. Travelling pedlars and gipsies who, under pretence of selling their wares, plunder back-yards and kitchens, boys who rob orchards, children who pilfer sugar or preserves, or who steal the playthings and sweetmeats of their companions, come under this class of thieves.

The fourth kind of theft, and this is one which is especially mentioned in your catechism, is *cheating in buying or selling*. By *cheating*, we mean overreaching our neighbours by some trick or artifice. Shopkeepers who give short weight and measure, or who adulterate their goods—that is, mix them up with something inferior, for example, sugar with sand, milk with water, &c.—are guilty of this sin. The same may be said of those who tell lies about their goods to deceive the customers as to their value or quality, who sell them for more than they are really worth, allowing for their own trouble and risk, who keep back part of the change which they are bound to return, who send in bills already paid, or charge for more than they have sold, &c. On the other hand, buyers commit the same sin when they take advantage of a shopkeeper's mistake as to the quality or price of the goods purchased, when they pass bad money, or when they seek in any way to defraud those with whom they deal. These sins of cheating, whether on the part of buyer or seller, are of course nothing less than downright robbery. Hence, Almighty God said to the Jews in the Old Law, "Thou shalt not have divers weights in thy bag, a greater and a less. Neither shall there be in thy house a greater bushel and a less. Thou shalt have a just and a true weight, and thy bushel shall be equal and true. For the Lord thy God abhorreth him that does these things, and he hateth all injustice" (Deut. xxv. 13–16. See also Lev. xix. 35, 36, and Prov. xx. 23).

The fifth way of wronging our neighbour is by *imposition*, which is a kind of cheating, though not necessarily in the way of buying and selling. Those who beg without necessity, or tell lies to excite compassion, are guilty of this sin. They wrong those from whom they obtain an alms, for the latter would not give if they knew the truth; and they wrong the deserving poor, who often have to go without relief on account of the great number of impostors. Those who order goods without the means of paying, who forge the names of others, or pretend to be acting for them in order to obtain money, goods, or credit; in a word, all those who try to get anything under false

pretences are guilty of the same sin. Indeed, the ways adopted by the dishonest for imposing upon others are as numerous as the fertile inventions of the human brain.

The sixth way of taking unjustly what belongs to our neighbour, and one which is especially grievous, is by *extortion*. Those are guilty of extortion who take advantage of the necessity of others to exact extravagant interest for the loan of money, or who in times of famine hoard up corn and provisions, refusing to sell except at unreasonable prices. This does not, however, prevent a shopkeeper from raising the price of his goods to a certain amount, according to their scarcity and the public demand.

Finally, we are guilty of wronging our neighbour in the way of *wilful damage* whenever we wilfully destroy or injure his property. For example, if any one through spite were to set fire to his neighbour's stack, to trample down his corn, or kill his poultry, he would be guilty of this kind of dishonesty. The same would be the case if the damage were not done through spite but through gross carelessness, for we are bound to use ordinary care that our acts should not be the cause of injury to others.

These, my dear children, are the seven different ways in which we may sin against the seventh commandment by the unjust taking away of our neighbour's goods. Before we go on to speak of the second kind of dishonesty which it prohibits, namely, the unjust keeping of what belongs to another, I will tell you a story which will show you the truth of the old proverb—

“HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY.”

A Quaker passing one day through a market stopped at a stall to inquire the price of some pears. “I will not charge you much for them,” said the fruit dealer, “but I am afraid that they will not suit you, for they are old and have lost their flavour.” “Thank thee, friend,” said the Quaker, “I will go to the next stand.” “Hast thou any good fruit to-day?” said he, addressing the next dealer. “Certainly,” replied the dealer, “excellent fruit. See, here are some of the finest pears of the season. They are small, but they have the richest flavour.” “I will take some, then, friend,” rejoined the Quaker. “Count me out a quarter of a hundred and send them to my house.” The pears were accordingly sent, but they proved miserably poor and tasteless.

The next day the Quaker again entered the market. He was immediately accosted by the dealer who had sold him the pears, and who said that he should be very happy to serve him, as he had a choice selection of fruit. "Nay, friend, thou hast deceived me once," said the Quaker, "and though thou mayest be telling the truth this time, yet I cannot trust to thee. Thy neighbour here dealt truthfully with me, and he shall have my custom. Thou wouldst do well to remember this, and to learn that a falsehood is a base thing in the beginning, and a very unprofitable one in the end."

### THE THREE ROBBERS.

A certain merchant, who was travelling through a forest with a quantity of jewels and precious ornaments, was attacked by robbers, who stripped him of all that he possessed and beat him severely. Having done so, they carried off the stolen treasure into their cave, and sent the youngest of their number into the neighbouring town to buy wine and provisions.

During his absence the two remaining robbers said to one another, "Why should we be obliged to share our treasure with that boy? As soon as he returns let us make an end of him." Meanwhile their young companion thought within himself as he journeyed to the town, "What a grand thing it would be if all that gold and silver were my own! And why should it not, for I can easily poison my two comrades?" Accordingly when he had reached the town and bought the provisions, he purchased some poison which he mixed with the wine; he then set out on his return.

No sooner had he reached the cave than his two companions set upon him and murdered him with their daggers. They then ate heartily and drank the poisoned wine. In a short time they died amid agonies of pain, and the dead bodies of the three were soon after discovered beside the treasure, which was restored to the rightful owner.

We now go on to see in what manner we may be guilty of the sin of dishonesty by *unjustly keeping what belongs to another*.

And, first of all, we sin in this way *when we do not restore what we find* to the rightful owner, provided we know or are able to discover him. Supposing, for example, that one of you in going to school were to find a muffler or satchel by the roadside. If you know whose it is, you can easily see that it is your duty to give it back to the owner as soon as possible, and that it would be stealing if you were to take and keep it for yourself. But what if you do not know to whom it belongs? You must do your best to find out. Perhaps one of your schoolfellows

has gone along the same road before you. You can easily inquire among them, and if none of them owns it, you should ask the neighbours or any one whom you think likely to know. But if, after all, you cannot find the owner, would it be a sin to keep it? Certainly not. Take notice, however, that the greater the value of the article you find, the more pains should you take to discover to whom it belongs; so if you were to find a watch or a purse of money, you ought to put an advertisement in the paper, or leave word at the police office, where people generally go to inquire when they have lost anything of value. If, after you have done all in your power, you are still unable to find the owner—although, as I have said, it would not be a sin to keep it—yet it would be far the best to give the money, or the value of the article, or at least a portion of it, in alms to the poor, or to have Masses said for the intention of the owner. And why so? Because this is what the owner would probably wish to be done, since he would thereby receive benefit from that which he had lost. And Almighty God would not fail to reward the finder abundantly for his charity and self-denial.

The second way of keeping unjustly what belongs to another is *by not returning what is lent to us or placed in our charge*. If any one, for example, were to lend you a book to read and you never returned it, you would really be stealing it from him, or something very like it. Again, if some one were to lend his neighbour a hundred pounds for a week, and he were to keep it for a year, the borrower would be acting unjustly, for he would be depriving his friend of the use of his money for that space of time. Persons who have money *in trust*, that is, placed in their charge for special purposes, and who neglect to employ it for those objects, are guilty of this kind of injustice. The same may be said of those tradespeople, such as tailors, dressmakers, goldsmiths, &c., who, having materials placed in their hands for any special purpose, reserve to themselves a portion of what is entrusted to them. They will often allege in excuse the custom of the trade and their right to certain things which they call perquisites,

but, unless such customs and rights, as they style them, are fully known and agreed to by their employers, they are without excuse in the sight of God. The roguery of one can never excuse the dishonesty of another.

#### HONESTY VALUED AND REWARDED.

St. Eligius, a famous French Bishop who flourished in the eighth century, was apprenticed in his youth to a goldsmith, and made such progress in his trade that the fame of his skill in working the precious metals reached the ears of King Clotaire II., who at that time ruled over the kingdom of France. This monarch being anxious to possess a chair of state of the richest materials and most superior workmanship, summoned Eligius to court, and gave orders that he should be supplied from the royal treasury with a large quantity of pure gold and a number of rich and costly jewels. The work being at length completed, the chair was brought home to the palace, and presented by Eligius to the king, who expressed his entire satisfaction and ordered a rich reward to be given to the young goldsmith. But what was his astonishment, when Eligius requested to know his pleasure with regard to the other chair, "for," said he, "finding that the materials were sufficient, I have made two state chairs exactly alike and corresponding with the directions given." This remarkable instance of honesty, contrasting as it did with the conduct of so many others who were employed at court, but sought only their own enrichment, made such an impression on the king, that he immediately nominated Eligius to the responsible office of keeper of the royal treasury, a post in which he ever displayed the same spotless integrity that he had shown in the management of his own business. After leading a holy and mortified life at court for some years, beloved by all and esteemed as a saint, he was consecrated Bishop of Noyon, in which sacred office he rendered important service to the Church of God.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

Q. Must we restore ill-gotten goods?

A. Yes; we are bound to restore ill-gotten goods if we are able, or else the sin will not be forgiven; we must also pay our debts.

We come now to speak of the third way of wronging our neighbour by unjustly keeping what belongs to him, and that is *when we do not restore ill-gotten goods*. The restitution of what we have stolen to the rightful owner is a strict duty, for the neglect of which millions are now burning in hell, and it is therefore most necessary that all should be well instructed as to the obligation of it and the manner of making it.

Remember, therefore, my dear children, throughout life, that there is no pardon from God for any injury which you have *knowingly* and *willingly* inflicted on your neighbour, unless you repair that injury to the utmost of your power. This is equally true of injuries which regard the property and those which affect the character of your neighbour; but it is of those which regard his property that we are here speaking, those which concern his character will be treated of under the eighth commandment. Bear in mind, then, that if you have stolen from your neighbour, cheated him in any way, or wilfully damaged his property, you are strictly bound, as a necessary condition of obtaining pardon, to make good the loss. Moreover, the loss which we have to make good is not the bare amount or value of what we have stolen or destroyed, but it is the *entire loss* which our neighbour has undergone, and which we might have foreseen that he would be in danger of undergoing from our unjust action. For example, let us suppose that a thief has stolen a hundred pounds from a shopkeeper. To supply the loss, the poor tradesman has to borrow another hundred pounds to enable him to preserve his credit and carry on his business. You can easily see that the thief has injured him not only to the amount of the hundred pounds which he stole, but also to the amount of the interest which the tradesman has to pay for the money which he has been obliged to borrow; therefore the thief is bound to make this good also. Take, again, the case of a person who has stolen a workman's tools. The poor man is unable to get employment without his tools, and remains for some days idle. The thief is obliged to restore not merely the value of the tools, which may be trifling, but the loss which the workman and his family have suffered in consequence. In a word, a thief is bound in justice to repay all the losses and expenses as well as the direct injury which has been caused by his theft. Hence we find Zaccheus in the Gospel restoring to those, whom he had wronged, fourfold the amount of that which he had deprived them, no doubt in order to make full atonement for all the losses which they might have suffered in consequence of his dishonesty. And our B. Lord praised



him highly for so doing, and assured him that his excellent dispositions had obtained his pardon (Luke xix. 8, 9).

So far we have been speaking of restitution in cases where a person has himself committed the theft or wilful damage by which his neighbour has suffered loss. But what shall we say of him who finds that he is, without any fault of his own, in possession of a stolen article or any property which in justice belongs to his neighbour? For example, a person inherits a fortune which he afterwards finds out to have been unjustly acquired, and to be really the property of another. In this case he must at once, when he has undoubted proof as to the ownership, give it up to the real heir. Again, supposing that you have purchased a watch or any other article which you learn afterwards has been stolen, you must give it up at once to the rightful owner, for he does not lose his right to his own property by the fact of your having been deceived in buying it. In this case, however, you could justly claim the money you had paid for it from him from whom you had bought it.

We next come to speak of those who, though they do not actually commit the theft or do the damage with their own hands, are equally guilty of it in the sight of God. I mean those who *co-operate* in the injustice; in other words, who have a share in doing it by being, in part at least, the cause of it. For example they may have *advised* another to commit a theft, or even *commanded* him to do so if he happened to be under their authority, as in the case of a servant or child. Again, they may have joined with others in some plan for injuring their neighbour, thus *consenting* to the wrong, though it may not have been inflicted by their own hands. Or they may have *provoked* some one by sneers and threats, or encouraged him by *praise and flattery* to injure another. They may also have undertaken to *hide* or *conceal* the stolen goods until they could be divided without danger, or to go shares and *partake* in the spoil in case the theft was committed. Again, they may have preserved *silence*, when it was their duty to speak, as in the case of servants who have the charge of certain goods, but allow their

masters to be plundered without opposition. Finally, they may have become sharers in the crime by promising protection and *defence* to those who commit it. These, my dear children, are the nine ways of co-operating or partaking in another person's sin which are mentioned in a latter part of the catechism, and when that sin happens to be a sin of injustice, those who partake of it not only incur the guilt of the sin, but also the obligation of restitution. For this, however, it is necessary that they should really have been, though perhaps in part only, the cause of the injury having been committed. For example, a person might harbour a thief after he had committed a crime, and though he might do wrong, he would not be obliged to repair the injury, unless he had actually induced the thief to commit the robbery by the promise of giving him shelter. Finally, in all cases of theft we must remember that whoever has the stolen property in his possession, is the first person obliged to restitution ; but if *he* neglects, the obligation falls on all who have had a share in the deed in any of the ways I have mentioned—each is bound to make good the loss in proportion to the part he has taken in the crime. If all the rest neglect, then the obligation of repairing the entire loss will fall upon any one of the number. The best plan to take in all such cases is to consult your confessor, both as to the extent of your obligation and the best manner of discharging it.

But some one will ask, What must I do if I have wronged my neighbour but am unable through poverty to make restitution? Will not God forgive the sin in that case? He will, provided that you have the sincere intention of repairing the injury as soon as it is in your power. If you are able to restore a portion of the amount, though not the whole, you must give back now what you can, and the remainder at the first opportunity. Meanwhile you must avoid all unnecessary expense, lay by a portion of your weekly earnings, and make restitution by degrees until the whole of the debt is discharged. But what do you think of a man who has wronged another, and declares to his confessor that he is too poor to restore, but still continues to frequent the public house, and spend money on

his own pleasure and amusement, putting off the duty of restitution from day to day? Such a one is undoubtedly mocking the Almighty, but, though he may deceive his confessor, he will not deceive God, who sees the real dispositions of his heart, and who strictly requires that restitution should be made without delay and to the utmost of the means in our power. To put off restoring what we owe when we have the means of doing it, is in itself a sin of injustice; it is like a fresh theft committed, for our neighbour has a right this very day to that of which we have deprived him. Hence it is often the duty of a confessor to defer giving absolution to a penitent, or to put off his Communion until restitution has actually been made. By so doing he really acts with the greatest charity towards his penitent, for the latter is thereby better prepared to receive the grace of the Sacrament, and is preserved from the unhappy fate of so many thousands who promise their confessors to make restitution, but by putting it off from day to day are in the end surprised by death, and eternally lost through the neglect of this essential duty. Listen to the following awful example on this subject related by St. Alphonsus Liguori.

#### FATAL NEGLECT OF RESTITUTION.

A certain father, who had committed many acts of injustice during his lifetime in order to enrich his family, finding his death approach, sent for a lawyer to make his will. As soon as he arrived, the dying man exclaimed, "Write down the following bequests:—*I leave my soul to the devil.*" Hereupon his wife and children cried out, "Alas! alas! the poor man is delirious." He replied, "I am not delirious. Lawyer, write, *I leave my soul to the devils that they may carry it to hell in punishment of the thefts I have committed. I also leave to the devils the soul of my wife, who encouraged me to steal that she might indulge her vanity. I also leave to the devils my children, who have been the cause of my thefts.*" The confessor who had heard his confessions during life, and was then assisting him, was struck with horror, and earnestly exhorted him not to despair, but to hope for everything from the Divine Mercy. But the wretched man again, addressing the lawyer, said, "Write, *I leave to the devils the soul of my confessor, because during life he always absolved me and did not oblige me to make restitution.*" So saying he fell back and expired.—*St. Liguori on the Commandments.*

From what I have said you will understand the abso-

lute necessity we are under of making restitution to the last farthing for every act of injustice committed against our neighbour, if we ever hope to enter the kingdom of heaven. But *to whom* must the restitution be made? Will it do if I give what I have stolen to the poor, or devote it to the building of a church, or get Masses said with the money for the poor souls in purgatory? No, it certainly will not do, unless it is quite impossible to make restitution to the person you have wronged; for example, through not knowing who he is or where he lives, or for some other cause. For you must always remember that it is your neighbour whom you have wronged, and not the poor, or the Church, or the souls in purgatory, and therefore that it is to your neighbour that restitution must be made. You have no right, without his leave, to give away *his* money in charity, for he might wish to employ it in some other way. If, however, he is not to be found, then you should do with his money what you think will do him most good, by devoting it, for example, to some pious or charitable work for the benefit of his soul. St. Paul, in speaking on this subject, says, "He that stole, let him now steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have something to give to him that suffereth need" (Ephes. iv. 28). Here the Apostle suggests alms to the poor as an excellent way of making restitution in certain cases. You will notice also, from the words of St. Paul, how strict is the obligation of restoring to the utmost what we have stolen, since he says that we must, if necessary, *labour with our hands* in some honest employment, in order that we may obtain the means of fully discharging our debt, and this, if no other way is possible, at least by works of charity to the poor.

We come now to speak of the last way in which we may wrong our neighbour by keeping what belongs to him, and that is when we neglect to pay our just debts. Hence the catechism says, *we must also pay our debts*. Remember, then, my dear children, that when you have bought anything, and it has been delivered up to you, the price you agreed to pay is no longer yours, but belongs to

him from whom you have purchased the article. It is *his* money, not your own, which you have in your purse. If, then, you go and spend it on something else, and leave your debt unpaid, you wrong your neighbour as much as if you had stolen from him. Even if you put off paying for an unreasonable time, you still wrong him, for no one willingly consents to be kept out of what belongs to him. It is this delay in the payment of bills which brings on tradespeople so many troubles, losses, and often total ruin. Under this class of dishonesty comes that grievous sin which is mentioned in the catechism as one of the four crimes which cry to heaven for vengeance, namely, *defrauding labourers of their wages*. Those masters and mistresses are guilty of this sin who cheat their servants of their just hire, and those also, though in a less degree, who delay to pay them for a long time, and thus expose them to want or inconvenience.

I have now explained the different ways in which we may sin against the seventh commandment either by unjustly taking away from our neighbour, or keeping what belongs to him. You will ask, perhaps, whether to do this is always a mortal sin, or whether it may not sometimes be only venial. This depends partly upon the amount which we steal, and partly upon the injury which we inflict upon the person whom we wrong. If the amount be great or the injury a serious one, then the sin is mortal; but if the amount be only trifling, then the sin is usually a venial one, because but a slight injury is inflicted on our neighbour. Thus it would be a venial sin to steal an apple or an orange, or even a small sum of money, unless it were from a very poor man; for the loss of a sixpence or a shilling might be a serious one to him. But notice, that if you often steal little things from the same person, it may come in time to be a mortal sin, for little things mount up and soon make a considerable sum. Indeed, if from the first you intended to go on stealing, it would be a mortal sin to begin with, for you have the intention of taking what will soon become a large amount, and may inflict a serious injury on your neighbour. Thus, for example, a shop boy who intends to steal a sum of

money from his master, but only takes sixpence or a shilling at a time for fear of it being missed, is guilty of a mortal sin of theft when he takes the first sixpence, on account of his wicked intention. Nay, even if you were to pilfer many little things from different people, the sin after a time would be mortal, because the total amount of the thefts would be large, though perhaps no particular person would be seriously injured. You would like to know, I daresay, how much would be considered such a serious amount as to make the theft a mortal sin. My dear children, it is impossible to tell you. If a number of little things be taken from different people, or even from the same person at different times, no doubt it requires a larger amount to be a grievous theft than if it all be taken at once from the same man, because the injury to our neighbour is less serious. But what exact amount is required in each case to make it a mortal sin God only knows. You must not therefore ask yourselves whether to take this or that is a mortal or a venial sin, but whether it is a theft or not. Those who accustom themselves to steal little things under the pretext that they are only trifles, show very little love to God, for they know that even this offends him. Besides they will always be in extreme danger of passing the line and committing mortal sin, for when the habit of pilfering is once formed, the thief goes on from little things to greater, and finds the temptation to steal, when a good opportunity presents itself, too strong to be resisted. And depend upon it, that a thief, though for a time he may escape detection, is sure to be found out in the end. Some day or other suspicion will fall on him, he will be watched and caught in the act, or some way or other the theft will be brought home to him. Then what becomes of him? His character is utterly ruined; he is looked upon as a mean contemptible creature in whom no one can place the slightest confidence, and he is pointed at by all with the finger of scorn. But, worst of all, he has incurred the Anger of God and merited his severe punishments. Oh! what true friends to their children are those parents who bring them up in the strictest honesty, and chastise

them severely if ever they are guilty of petty thefts ! If it is true of other things, it is, above all, true of stealing, that to spare the rod is to spoil the child. Do *you*, parents, then, be always firm in chastising severely the least theft of which your children are guilty. If it is from others that they have stolen, see that they go back with what they have taken and restore it at once, no matter how trifling its value is. And do *you*, children, be grateful to your parents if they are strict with you on this point ; for, by acting thus, they are preserving you from much misery and sin. In conclusion, if ever you are tempted to steal, say a Hail Mary to our B. Lady, to preserve you from such a crime, and go at once out of the way of temptation. Listen now to a true story I am going to tell you about a poor Irish servant girl who was tempted to steal her master's money.

#### THE IRISH SERVANT GIRL.

A few years ago there lived in London a gentleman who was extremely prejudiced against our holy religion, and never lost an opportunity of laughing at and ridiculing its practices. Upon one occasion, however, when Catholic doctrines became the subject of conversation and ridicule, it was noticed that he preserved a grave silence. Being asked the reason, he related to the company the following story :—

“ You wonder,” said he, “ why I no longer join with you, as I used to do, in scoffing at Catholic practices ; I will tell you. A few days ago I was busy writing in my room, when I had occasion to leave my desk in order to fetch a certain paper from an inner apartment. While I was so engaged, the servant girl, who is an Irish Catholic, happened to enter the room to mend the fire, for, as I had not answered to her knock, she imagined that I had gone out. Now, I had left by chance upon my desk a large sum of money, and I could see that, as soon as she entered the room, she was attracted by the glitter of the gold. I determined to watch her narrowly, for I was in a position to observe all her movements, though she had no knowledge of my presence. On perceiving the gold she dropped the coal-box, and advanced eagerly to the table. She then stretched out her hand, and was on the very point of clutching the money, when, to my astonishment, she suddenly withdrew her arm and made with her hand the sign of the cross, saying aloud, ‘ The Cross of Christ be betwixt me and my master's money ! ’ She then turned her back and fairly ran out of the room, leaving her brush and coal-box on the floor. Now I am convinced from this that the pious practices of the Catholic religion, so far from being idle and

superstitious, are most holy and pleasing to God, since they are the means of raising the heart to him, and drawing down grace in moments of strong temptation."—*The Lamp*.

#### THE GOOD FATHER.

When St. Francis of Sales was a little boy, not quite seven years old, he was one day playing in a room at his father's castle, when he noticed lying on the floor the waistcoat of a workman who was employed about the place. Attached to it was a silk ribbon of different colours which immediately attracted the child's attention. No sooner did he see it than he longed to have it, and, looking round and seeing no one near, he took and hid it. After a short time the workman came back for his waistcoat and perceived at once that some one had stolen the ribbon. He made inquiries among the servants, but to no purpose, for they all denied that they had touched it.

At length the matter came to the ears of the Count of Sales, the father of Francis, who sent for his child and asked him whether he knew anything of the workman's ribbon. The truthful boy acknowledged at once that he had taken it, and, falling on his knees, expressed his sorrow with many tears, and begged his father's pardon. All who beheld him were touched alike by the child's candour and his sincere sorrow, and joined in entreating his father to forgive him this his first offence, but the latter, knowing well that petty thefts, when left uncorrected, lead to greater ones, and, judging, like a wise and prudent parent, that it was his duty, even at the expense of his own feelings, to do all in his power to inspire his son with a horror of so serious a fault, sent for a rod and chastised him on the spot. From that time so far was Francis from falling into a like sin, that he grew up a model of innocence and virtue.—*Life of St. Francis of Sales*.

There is another well-known story which is handed down to us by an ancient Greek writer, and though we cannot be sure about it being a true one, yet it shows us that even pagans understood how wicked and cruel is the conduct of those parents who permit, and much more of those who encourage, petty thefts on the part of their children.

#### THE BAD MOTHER.

A certain boy had the habit of stealing from his neighbours trifling articles which he brought home to his mother, who never chastised or reproved him. When he grew older he went on stealing things of greater value, and became a confirmed thief. At length he was discovered in the act, and, being taken by the officers of justice, was brought before the judge, who condemned him to death. When he arrived at the place of execution, he perceived his mother



among the crowd shedding many tears and bewailing his fate, upon which he begged leave to speak to her once more before he died. Permission being granted, his mother drew near, and he bent his head as if he would whisper something to her, but, instead of doing so, he caught her ear between his teeth and bit it off, regardless of her shrieks and reproaches. Hereupon the judge reproved him severely for his unnatural conduct, to whom he said, "I have only treated her as she deserved, for it is she who has brought me to this. Had she punished me in my childhood for my petty thefts, I should not, now that I am grown up, have been condemned to die on the gallows."—*Æsop's Fables*.

We will now pass on to the tenth commandment, which, as I have told you, is closely connected with the seventh.

**Q.** What does the Tenth Commandment forbid?

**A.** The Tenth Commandment forbids all envious and covetous thoughts and unjust desires of our neighbour's goods and profits.

The seventh commandment forbids us to injure our neighbour in his property by any act or deed; the tenth forbids us to wrong him even by thought. This we do when we *covet* his goods; in other words, when we inordinately desire to possess what belongs to him. Such desires are often very dangerous, for the wish to possess any object is soon followed by the thought of how to obtain it, and if no easy and honest way of getting it comes to our mind, the devil is not long in suggesting to us some plan that is unjust and dishonest. In fact, coveting is the high road to stealing. If there were none who coveted their neighbour's goods, there would be no longer any thieves. Hence Almighty God forbids, in the tenth commandment, *all covetous thoughts and unjust desires of our neighbour's goods and profits*.

You will ask me, perhaps, my dear children, if it is *coveting* when you simply wish for something nice that you see. No; not if it is a mere passing wish, though such desires are both foolish and useless. It is when you keep thinking over the object of your wish, when you feel discontented and miserable because you have not got it, and desire to have it, no matter by what means, it is then that it becomes coveting. This is what we mean by desiring *inordinately*, because such desires are contrary to the order established by God. Indeed, they are a kind of

repining against God for not having given you what you long for, and hence such thoughts are most displeasing to him on account of your want of submission to his Holy Will. Besides, you commit an injustice against your neighbour if you desire to possess what belongs to him, rather than that he should have it, for it is *just* that he should have what God has given him. If ever such thoughts and desires come into your mind, put them away at once with a little prayer, and try to think of something else; thus will you keep your souls in peace, and preserve them from much sin and unhappiness. Those who give way to those thoughts are always full of trouble and uneasiness; they cannot even enjoy what they have, for they are always longing for what they have not. The history of Achab and Naboth in the Holy Scripture is a striking example of this, and of the dreadful crimes which are often the consequence of giving way to the sin of covetousness.

#### NABOTH'S VINEYARD.

"Naboth," says the sacred writer, "had a vineyard near the palace of Achab, King of Samaria. And Achab spoke to Naboth, saying, *Give me thy vineyard that I may make me a garden of herbs, because it is nigh and joining to my house, and I will give thee for it a better vineyard; or, if thou think it more convenient for thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.* Naboth answered him, *The Lord be merciful to me and not let me give thee the inheritance of my fathers.*

"And Achab came into his house angry and fretting because of the word which Naboth had spoken. And casting himself upon his bed, he turned his face to the wall and would eat no bread. And Jezabel his wife said to him, *What is the matter that thy soul is so grieved and why eatest thou no bread?* And he answered her, *I spoke to Naboth and said to him, 'Give me thy vineyard and take money for it, or if it please thee, I will give thee a better vineyard.'* And he said, *'I will not give thee my vineyard.'* Then Jezabel said to him, *Thou art of great authority indeed, and governest well the kingdom of Israel. Arise, eat bread and be of good cheer, I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth.* So she wrote letters in Achab's name, and sealed them with his ring, and sent them to the ancients and the chief men that were in the city and that dwelt with Naboth. And this was the tenor of the letters, *Proclaim a fast and make Naboth sit among the chief of the people. And suborn two men, sons of Belial, against him, and let them bear false witness that he hath blasphemed God and the king; and then carry him out and stone him, and so let him die.*

"And the men of his city did as Jezabel had commanded them. They proclaimed a fast and made Naboth sit among the chief of the people. And bringing two men, sons of the devil, they made them sit against him, and they like men of the devil bore witness against him before the people, saying, *Naboth hath blasphemed God and the king.* Wherefore they brought him forth without the city and stoned him to death. And they sent to Jezabel saying, *Naboth is stoned and is dead.*

"And it came to pass when Jezabel heard that Naboth was stoned and dead, that she said to Achab, *Arise and take possession of the vineyard of Naboth, for Naboth is not alive but dead.* And when Achab heard this he arose and went down to the vineyard of Naboth to take possession of it.

"And the word of the Lord came to Elias the Thesbite, saying, *Arise and go down to meet Achab; behold he is going down to the vineyard of Naboth to take possession of it. And thou shalt speak to him, saying, 'Thus saith the Lord, Thou hast slain, moreover also thou hast taken possession. In this place wherein the dogs have licked the blood of Naboth, they shall lick thy blood also. And the dogs shall eat Jezabel in the field of Jezrahel'*" (3 Kings xxi.)

I have now explained to you the various sins of deed and of thought which are forbidden by the seventh and tenth commandments. But every commandment, as I have told you, *commands* as well as forbids. What then are the duties which these two commandments enjoin? They are principally two, namely, to give to every one his due, which is the perfect practice of justice; and to be content with our own condition and state of life.

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### THIRTY-THIRD INSTRUCTION.

*The Eighth Commandment. What it forbids. False Testimony, Rash Judgment, Lies, Calumny, Detraction, and Talebearing—Obligation of Restitution. What the Eighth Commandment commands.*

Q. What is the Eighth Commandment?

A. The Eighth Commandment is "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

The Apostle St. James tells us, my dear children, that the tongue is a little member, but that it is the cause of innumerable evils, defiling the whole body, inflaming the

passions, and infecting the soul with a deadly poison (James iii. 5-8). I have already explained to you some of the terrible evils which spring from the abuse of this unruly member. False teaching, cursing, swearing, blaspheming, injurious words, impure talk, bad advice, &c., are all sins of the tongue, but there are many others; for example, all words which tend to ruin the character and destroy the good name of our fellow-men. It is of these that we speak under the eighth commandment—*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*

This commandment is given us by God to preserve our character from the unjust attacks of malicious men, in the same way as the fifth commandment is given us to protect the safety of our person, the sixth to guard our purity, and the seventh to secure our earthly goods from the violence and injustice of others. Were it not for the eighth commandment, our good name—which, as the wise man tells us, is far more precious than great riches (Prov. xxii. 1)—would be ever at the mercy of envious and designing men. Let us now see what are the particular sins which are here forbidden.

Q. What does the Eighth Commandment forbid?

A. The Eighth Commandment forbids all false testimony, rash judgment, and lies.

Q. What else is forbidden by the Eighth Commandment?

A. Calumny, detraction, and talebearing, and any words which injure our neighbour's character, are forbidden by the Eighth Commandment.

In these two answers are mentioned seven distinct sins, which all tend more or less to the taking away of our neighbour's character, and are therefore forbidden by the eighth commandment.

By *false testimony*, we mean bearing false witness against any one in a court of justice. This is the most grievous of all the sins here named, because by it we offer the greatest outrage to God, and inflict the greatest injury upon our neighbour. You know, I daresay, that when any one is called as a witness before a public tribunal, he is always examined upon oath. A copy of the New Testament is placed in his hand, and he swears upon that,

which is the Word of God, to answer with perfect truth the questions put to him. If, therefore, he answers falsely, he has called upon the God of Truth to bear witness to that which is a lie. This, as I have before explained to you, is the crime of *perjury*, and it is a perjury of the most grievous kind, both on account of the public and solemn manner in which it is committed, and on account of the injury thereby inflicted upon society. Indeed, if the words of witnesses thus solemnly pledged to speak the truth could not be depended upon, there would be an end of all public justice, and every one would be at the mercy of the malice and rapacity of his enemies. Moreover, the injustice committed against him whose character is thus defamed is almost beyond remedy, for besides the punishment inflicted upon him in consequence of this false evidence, the public disgrace which is attached to the sentence accompanies him throughout life, and often falls likewise upon his family and nearest connections. Of those who are guilty of this heinous sin, some are prompted by sheer malice, like the Jews who accused our B. Lord before Pilate as guilty of blasphemy and sedition, or the two elders who out of revenge publicly charged the chaste Susanna with that very crime which she had refused to consent to. Others give false testimony through interest, for instance, those who swear against their neighbour in order to remove blame from their own shoulders. Finally, there are many who commit this sin through a criminal negligence, because they do not consider well what they say. They speak at random, exaggerate what they have seen or heard, give their suspicions as facts, or represent as certain what is only doubtful. This kind of false testimony is less grievous than that which is prompted by malice or interest, but still it cannot be excused, where the negligence is great, from the guilt of mortal sin and the obligation of restitution. For a witness is strictly bound, both out of respect for his oath and regard for the rights of justice, to weigh well what he says, and to state nothing but what he knows to be the exact truth.

The second sin against this commandment is *rash judgment*; that is, condemning a person in our own mind

as guilty of a fault upon slight and insufficient grounds. If we have good grounds for believing him guilty, then our judgment is not *rash*; though charity, "which thinketh no evil but hopeth all things" (1 Cor. xiii. 5, 7), would rather incline us not to judge him at all, but to leave all judgment to God. Moreover, how liable we all are, even the wisest amongst us, to be deceived and misled by appearances! The golden cup of Joseph, which was found in the sack of Benjamin, seemed in the eyes of all a convincing proof of his guilt, and yet he was perfectly innocent (Gen. xliv.) So it is continually in regard to the judgments formed by men; for God alone can see all things, and he alone knows not only the acts but the secret motives and dispositions of each one. "Man seeth those things that appear," says the Holy Scripture, "but the Lord beholdeth the heart" (1 Kings xvi. 7).

It is not enough, however, to have a horror of rash judgments, we must also, as far as we can, avoid even rash *suspensions*; for it is unjust not only to condemn, but even to *suspect* a person of wrong without cause. Moreover, we should strive always to act by that golden rule of charity, "Do as you would be done by." Now which of you would like to be even suspected of being a thief or a liar on slight and insufficient grounds, or perhaps without any grounds at all? Would you not think it exceedingly unjust and uncharitable in those who suspected you, and much more so if they actually formed a judgment about you and condemned you in their own minds? Avoid, then, my dear children, in your own conduct that which you would so much blame in others. Turn your thoughts, rather, to your own faults, which are so many and so great, but to which you are often blind. "Why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye," says our Lord, "and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye?" (Matt. vii. 3). And again, "Judge not and you shall not be judged, condemn not and you shall not be condemned. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged, and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Luke vi. 37; Matt. vii. 2).

## THE ABBOT AND THE ANGEL.

It is related in the *Lives of the Fathers of the Desert* that the Abbot Isaac, being one day present at an assembly of the religious, formed a bad opinion of one of the monks whom he met there, and, from some trifle which he noticed, judged him to be worthy of correction. Upon his return to his cell he found an Angel waiting at the door, who opposed his entrance. Filled with awe, the Abbot humbly begged to know the object of his mission. "I am come from our B. Lord," replied the Angel, "to inquire what you wish to be done with that monk whom you have condemned in your own mind?" The holy Abbot at once cast himself upon the ground, acknowledged his fault, and implored pardon of God. "Go," said the Angel, "God pardons you ; but in future be more careful about judging your brethren and condemning those whom God himself, perhaps, has not condemned."—*Lives of the Fathers of the Desert.*

## TOTILA AND THE BISHOP.

In the days of Totila, king of the Goths, there lived at Narni in Italy a holy Bishop named Cassius. It happened that Totila, seeing him one day, formed a bad opinion of him, on account of his red and fiery complexion. "This man," said he to himself, "is certainly a drunkard." But Almighty God undertook upon the spot the defence of his servant. At the same moment he permitted a devil to enter into the person of Totila's sword-bearer, who became grievously tormented by the evil spirit. The bystanders in the greatest alarm carried the poor possessed man to the feet of the holy Bishop, who at once delivered him by simply making over him the sign of the cross. Thereupon Totila retracted his judgment, and ever after esteemed and revered Cassius as a saint.—*St. Gregory the Great.*

The next sin which we speak of—that of telling *lies*—is one against which I am particularly anxious to warn you, both because it is, unhappily, very common among children, and because it is the root of many other vices. To tell a lie, is to say what we believe to be untrue. If we believe that we are speaking the truth, and happen to be mistaken, it is not a lie ; on the other hand, if we say what we believe to be false, and it turns out to be true, it is really a lie in the sight of God.

All lies are sinful, because they are all directly opposed to Divine Truth, which is one of the most admirable Perfections of the Almighty. Moreover, they are an abuse of that most excellent gift of speech, which God

has given us to enable us to make our thoughts known to our fellow-men; whereas the liar uses his speech to conceal his thoughts and deceive his neighbour. But though all lies are sinful, they are not all equally sinful; some are much more grievous than others. The worst lie of all is that which is told in confession by him who conceals a sin, for such a lie is a *sacrilegious* lie, a lie told to God himself, and is a profanation of a holy Sacrament. The lie next in guilt is that which is told to injure our neighbour's character; for example, when a person gives false testimony in a court of justice, or when he spreads abroad calumnies against his neighbour, accusing him of crimes which he has never committed. Such lies are called *malicious lies*, because they are told through malice on purpose to injure others, and they are very grievous sins. But there are other lies which are much less in guilt, namely, *lies of excuse* and *lies of jest*. These lies are sometimes called by foolish people *white lies*, as if that which is black in its very nature could ever become white. It is true that they may not cause our neighbour any injury, but still they are displeasing to God and hurtful to the soul. They displease God, because he is the very Truth, and as the Scripture says, "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord" (Prov. xii. 22). They are hurtful to the soul, not only on account of the wound they inflict upon it, but also because a habit of lying is thereby formed, which is the foundation of many vices. If a child is a habitual liar, depend upon it that, if not cured of this vice in time, he will grow up both a hypocrite and a thief, for truth is the twin sister of candour and honesty. "Show me a liar," says the proverb, "and I will show you a thief." Moreover, to tell a lie to excuse yourself is an act of cowardice, and shows a certain weakness of character and principle, which may well cause us to fear that so feeble and timid a soul will soon fall a prey to its evil passions and the temptations of the devil. Be always, then, my dear children, most exact in speaking the truth, and pray to God to give you a great love of this excellent virtue which is so pleasing to him. Remember that if you love and always speak the truth, you are in a



special manner the children of God, who is the Divine Truth. On the contrary, if you have a habit of lying, you are the children of the devil, who is, as our B. Lord says, a liar and the father of lies (John viii. 44). You must not tell the smallest lie even to save the whole world, for it is better that the world should be destroyed than that God should be offended. Much less, then, should you tell a lie to save yourself from a scolding or a beating, which are soon over, and moreover, are intended for your good. If you have done wrong, be sorry for it and own it, then you are soon forgiven both by God and your parents; whereas if you try to hide it by a lie, you are guilty of a fresh sin, and one often much greater than the fault you first committed. Listen to these two lines of one of our own poets on this subject; they are well worth remembering—

“Dare to be true, nothing can need a lie;  
The sin that needs it most grows two thereby.”\*

Yes, *dare to be true*. Be *brave* enough to speak the truth, for it is an act of true courage. Your parents or teachers may punish you, but they will respect and trust you, the Saints and Angels will look down on you with approval, God will hear and will reward you. *Nothing can need a lie*, because nothing can excuse it. Moreover the sin you have committed, and that seems to *need it most, grows two thereby*, since you offend God doubly, and thus make it far more difficult to obtain his pardon. And depend upon it, sooner or later the liar will be found out in his lies, for, as the proverb says, “truth will out.” In conclusion, what is more contemptible than the character of a liar, whose word is never taken, whose denials are never believed, whose promises are never trusted? On the contrary, what is more noble, what more amiable, than the character of a child who is always candid, truthful, and sincere? Such a one, wherever he goes, carries with him the esteem, the confidence, the respect of every one.

\* George Herbert.

## THE BISHOP AND THE SOLDIERS.

It is related in Church History that upon one occasion the emperor Maximinian, a cruel persecutor of the faithful, despatched a troop of soldiers to apprehend and cast into prison Antony, the venerable Bishop of Nicomedia. It happened that, without knowing it, they came to the house of the holy Bishop, and being hungry, knocked at the door and begged for some refreshment. He received them with great kindness, invited them to sit down at table, and set before them such food as he had at his disposal. When the meal was ended, the soldiers entered upon the subject of their mission, and requested him to inform them where they could meet with the Bishop Antony. "He is here before you," replied the Saint. The soldiers, full of gratitude for his generous hospitality, declared that they would never lay hands upon him, but would report to the emperor that they had not been able to find him. "God forbid," replied the Saint, "that I should save my life by becoming a party to a lie. I would rather die a thousand times than that you should offend Almighty God." So saying, he gave himself into their hands, and was conducted to prison.—*Catechisme de Perseverance.*

## DEATH RATHER THAN A LIE.

During the great French Revolution, at the end of last century, the Catholic churches were pillaged throughout the country, and closed for public worship. The priests also were proscribed, and forced to conceal themselves in private houses, or even to seek shelter in the thickets of the forests or in the caves and fastnesses of the mountains. It happened about this time that a young girl, named Magdalen Larralde, of the village of Sare, on the borders of Spain, fearing to have recourse to her own parish priest in his place of concealment, was wont to cross the mountains whenever she desired to approach the Sacraments, in order to seek spiritual assistance from the Capuchin Fathers at Vera, on the Spanish side of the Pyrennees. One day, on returning from the convent, she fell in with an outpost of the French army, which was then stationed along the frontier, in consequence of the war which raged between the two countries. The soldiers immediately seized her as a spy, and dragged her before the general, who questioned her as to the object of her presence in Spain. Magdalen answered simply and without a moment's hesitation that she had been to confession. The officer, touched by her youth and innocent bearing, and anxious, if possible, to save her, quickly replied, "Unfortunate woman, do not say that, for it will be your sentence of death. Say, rather, that the advance of the French troops frightened you, and drove you to seek shelter on Spanish ground." "But then I should say what would not be true," answered the girl, "and I would rather die a thousand times than offend God by telling a lie." In vain did the general urge and solicit her to yield; her firmness never

gave way, and she was conducted before the tribunal at St. Jean de Luz. Before her judges, Magdalen again, with unflinching courage, refused to save her life by a lie. She was, therefore, condemned to the guillotine, and, as she walked to the place of execution, her step never faltered, and she ceased not to invoke the assistance of God, chanting aloud the *Salve Regina* in honour of the Queen of Heaven.—*The Month*.

#### THE IMPOSTOR STRUCK DEAD.

St. James, Bishop of Nisibis, was one day travelling through the country, when he was accosted by a beggar who appeared to be in deep distress. On approaching the Saint he implored him with earnest supplications to bestow upon him an alms to enable him to bury his companion, who, as he said, had just expired by the roadside. The holy Bishop readily gave him what he asked, and went on his way praying earnestly for the soul of the deceased. The beggar, laughing at the thought of having succeeded so easily in imposing upon the Saint, meanwhile ran back to his companion, whom he had left lying upon the ground at a little distance, pretending to be dead. On coming to the spot he called out to him to get up, as the trick had been successful, but he received no answer. He approached nearer, and took his companion by the hand in order to arouse him, but what was his horror at finding that he was really dead! Immediately with loud cries and lamentation he ran after the Saint, and, throwing himself on his knees before him, acknowledged the deceit which they had practised, and implored his pardon and intercession. The servant of God having first reproved him for his sin, betook himself to prayer, and the unhappy man, who had provoked God to deprive him of life, was restored at the prayers of the Saint and became a sincere penitent.—*Butler's Saints' Lives*.

We come now to speak of the sin of *calumny*, by which we mean a lie told to injure our neighbour's character. It is sometimes malice, sometimes self-interest, which leads people into this sin; for example, a person may falsely accuse another of theft through spite and revenge, or he may do so to get him turned out of his employment, in order that he himself may step into his place. In either case the sin is very grievous, for, as I have told you, there is nothing, except life itself, of such value to us among temporal goods, or which we prize so highly as our good name. Our means of employment, the peace and happiness of our lives, and frequently that of those who are dear to us, depend in a great measure upon our bearing an unblemished character. Hence he who un-

justly robs us of this, inflicts on us the greatest of injuries. To deprive us of our earthly goods, or to cause us some bodily injury, is generally a less evil than to blacken our character in the eyes of our fellow-men.

The next sin mentioned, namely, *detraction*, consists in taking away our neighbour's character by publishing his secret faults. You see it is a different thing from calumny, which is telling lies of our neighbour. The detractor tells the truth, but then he has no right to tell it, for every one is entitled to his good name unless he has forfeited it by some public crime. There are, however, certain cases in which it is our duty to make known the bad conduct of others to those whose office it is to advise and correct them. For example, if we knew that any boy or girl was keeping very bad company, or going secretly to some dangerous place of amusement, it would not only be lawful, but it would be our duty, to make it known to the parents or guardians of the child. Silence in such a case would be a sin, for it might easily be the cause of the eternal loss of a soul. But this is very different from the case of a detractor, who no sooner hears of any one having done wrong than he goes about to publish it. "Have you heard," he says, "what such a one has done? I could not have believed it, yet I fear it is too true. Come, I will tell it you as a secret." And so the *secret* goes about from one to another, until the poor victim of the detractor's malice has lost his good name in the eyes of all that know him.

Sometimes, my dear children, the calumniator and detractor succeed in destroying the character of their neighbour without actually charging him with any crime, but by running down his good deeds, or by artfully hinting that there is something which people do not know which would quite change the good opinion they have of him. "Oh!" they will say, "such a one is not so good as he looks. For my part—but I will say no more, for the least said is soonest mended." And so their hearers go away under the impression that the person whom they have been speaking about has been guilty of some secret crime, which the detractor is too good-natured to mention.

—an error which can never be removed, as no special sin has been laid to his charge. Could anything be meaner, more ungenerous, and more cruel than such conduct? It may well be compared to that of the midnight assassin, who lurks under cover to stab his enemy in the dark. Of such and of all detractors the Holy Scripture truly says, “They have whetted their tongues like a sword (Ps. lxiii. 4). Their words are smoother than oil, and the same are darts” (Ps. liv. 20). And again, “They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent, and the venom of asps is under their lips” (Ps. cxxxix. 4).

There is another sin against this eighth commandment not mentioned in the catechism, but of which you will often hear speak, namely, the sin of *backbiting*. The difference between backbiting and the two vices we have just been speaking of is that, in backbiting, you do not tell *lies* of your neighbour, which would be calumny; neither do you publish his *secret sins*, which would be detraction; but you simply take a pleasure in speaking of *his faults and failings which are known to every one*. But is there any harm in this? Yes, certainly; for such a practice is contrary to Christian charity, which bids us to love our neighbour as ourselves, and do to others for the love of Christ what we would wish them to do to us. Now, which of us would like our own faults to be made the subject of conversation? If we *are* passionate, or untruthful, or greedy, do you think we should like these failings of ours to be discussed over a tea-table or by the fireside, and all the lies we have told, and the passions we have been in, and the times we have eat or drunk too much, brought up against us and talked about? Well, then, if we should not like it ourselves, it is plain that charity forbids us to do it to others. Yet, alas, how common is this vice among mankind! Seldom do people meet together but the faults of their neighbours form the chief subject of their conversation, and well is it if they only speak of their public faults, and do not fall into the still more grievous sins of detraction and calumny. My dear children, have throughout life a great horror of the mean and ungenerous vice of backbiting. If you find yourselves

in company where your neighbours' faults are discussed, take no part in such conversation. On the contrary, discourage it as much as you can ; begin to speak of something else, or at least show by your silence that you are not pleased, according to the advice of the wise man, " by the sadness of the countenance the mind of the offender is corrected " (Eccles. vii. 4). Happy, indeed, will you be when you come to die, if you have within you the sweet and consoling assurance that throughout life you have kept your tongue from all uncharitable conversation, and have been as jealous in guarding your neighbour's character as you would be in protecting your own.

#### SLANDER REBUKED.

It is related of St. Augustine, the illustrious Doctor of the Church, that he had an extreme horror of all uncharitable conversation. To prevent any discourse of this nature from being held in his presence, he caused the following inscription to be painted in large letters upon the walls of the room where he usually entertained his friends—

" Slanderer beware, this is no place for thee ;  
Here nought shall reign but truth and charity."

It happened one day that some of his guests began to speak in his presence of the faults of an absent neighbour. The holy Bishop, with a grave and severe look, immediately reproved them, saying, " My friends, you must either cease to speak on such a subject, or it will be necessary for me to have those verses blotted out from the walls of my room."—*Catech. de Perscverance.*

The last sin mentioned in the catechism against this commandment, is that of *tale-bearing*, by which we mean the habit of carrying tales backwards and forwards from house to house, from person to person. For example, Peter goes to the house of Paul, who happens to say in his presence something unkind about his neighbour John. Peter's next visit is to the house of John, to whom he repeats word for word, and often with additions, what Paul has said of him. Thus does Peter create an ill feeling, and not unfrequently sow the seeds of a lamentable quarrel between two neighbours. Even children often cause trouble in families, sometimes between their very parents, by carrying tales from one to another.

Whenever, therefore, you see or hear anything that is likely to cause annoyance to others, or create ill feeling, keep it to yourselves, unless it is something which it is your duty to tell, and then tell it only to the proper person. Tale-bearers are the greatest pests to society; they are the cause of half the quarrels and dissensions which arise among mankind. Moreover, though they may bitterly repent of it, they can seldom repair the evil they have caused, or undo the consequences of their own thoughtless words. My dear children, avoid carefully this common but most mischievous vice.

Before we go on to the next question, I will say a word upon another mean and pernicious habit about which you may examine yourselves under the eighth commandment when preparing for confession. It is that of *prying into the secrets of others*. With regard to this I may truly say that if a tale-bearer is a contemptible creature, a *prier into secrets* is even more so, though not perhaps equally dangerous. He is ever on the watch to gratify a morbid curiosity by listening at doors, peeping into drawers and boxes, opening and reading letters and secret papers. To do these things is not only mean, but it is actually sinful. Nay, it may even amount to the guilt of a mortal sin, for instance, if you were to open and read a letter that is likely to contain something that the owner would be very much grieved to have known to others. Always resist at the beginning these itchings of curiosity, and go out of the way of temptation. Look upon it as a mean and contemptible practice, unworthy of a noble and generous soul, to attempt to pry into the secrets of others.

We now come to speak of a very important subject, namely, the obligation which rests upon those who have unjustly taken away their neighbours' character, to repair the injury, with all its consequences, to the utmost of their power.

Q. What is he bound to do who has injured his neighbour by speaking ill of him?

A. He who has injured his neighbour by speaking ill of him, must make him satisfaction, and restore his good name as far as he can.

Yes, my dear children, as there is no pardon from God for those who have stolen their neighbours' goods, unless they restore that which they have stolen to the last farthing, so neither is there any forgiveness for those who have robbed their neighbour of what is still more precious, namely, his character, unless *they make him satisfaction and restore his good name as far as they are able*. Whoever by false testimony, or by calumny, or by detraction, has deprived his neighbour of the confidence and esteem of his fellow-men, has inflicted upon him a grievous injury, and justice therefore requires that he should do all in his power to restore to him that of which he has robbed him. To do this he must retract his false accusation, and must do it in presence of those before whom the *calumny* has been spoken. Nay more, if the story has spread abroad and become public he must retract it in public. In every case he must see that those, to whose ears it has reached, are informed that there is no ground for the charge which has been made.

But what, you will say, must *he* do who has taken away his neighbour's good name by revealing his *secret sin*; in other words, who has been guilty of *detraction*? It is clear that he cannot retract his words, for he cannot declare a man to be innocent of a crime when he knows him to be really guilty. He must, however, do all that he can in accordance with truth to repair the wrong which he has inflicted. For example, he might make what excuses he can for the guilty person, if the case admits any; or he might publish his good deeds when opportunity offers, as he has done his bad ones, and make known the good points of his character. By doing this prudently and discreetly he may be able, in some degree at least, to remove the evil impression which his words have made, and to restore to him whom he has wronged the good opinion of others.

This, however, my dear children, is not all that the calumniator or detractor is bound to do in the way of making restitution. It may happen that the false charge which he has uttered, or the secret crime which he has revealed, has been the means of depriving the injured



man of his employment, his custom in trade, or his means of subsistence. It may have caused him some serious loss or heavy expense. This also must be set right; the loss must be made good, the injury repaired as far as it is in the power of him who has inflicted it. See, then, what an awful responsibility these sins of the tongue bring upon the soul. Watch, therefore, carefully over that unruly member, that no word may ever escape your lips which can in any way blacken the character, or destroy the good name of your neighbour. And if ever you err in this respect, through want of prudence or through bad feeling towards any one, hasten to recall your words at once before they are repeated to others and the injury has thus become greater and more difficult to repair.

#### THE STOLEN BOOK.

Among the holy solitaries, who formerly peopled the deserts of Egypt, was a monk named Paphnucius, who for his singular piety, austerity, and innocence of life is justly venerated among the Saints. His extraordinary virtue and reputation for sanctity excited feelings of envy in the breast of a certain wicked monk, who concealed under the garb of a religious the pride and passion of a worldling. Being determined to destroy the character of St. Paphnucius, he secretly entered his cell one Sunday morning when all the religious had gone out to Mass, and hid his own prayer-book under a pile of mats which lay in one corner. When Mass was ended he complained aloud to the Abbot Isidore, in presence of all the community, that some one had entered his cell and stolen his prayer-book. The assembled monks were filled with grief and indignation at hearing of the event, for such a crime had never yet been heard of among the holy solitaries. Meanwhile the wicked monk earnestly besought Isidore to send some of their number to search the cells, and to forbid any one to leave the spot until the return of the messengers. Three monks were accordingly chosen for the purpose, and they at once set out to execute their commission. They searched every cell, and the book was of course found in that of Paphnucius. It is impossible to describe the grief and astonishment of the assembled monks at hearing the result of the inquiry, for St. Paphnucius was both beloved and venerated by all his brethren. The proofs were, however, convincing, and as the Saint uttered not a word in his defence, he was adjudged guilty and condemned to a severe penance for the space of fifteen days. Meanwhile the calumniator returned to his cell rejoicing at the success of his scheme.

No sooner was the term of the penance expired than Almighty

God took into his own hands the defence of the innocent Paphnucius and the punishment of his guilty accuser. The wicked monk became possessed by an evil spirit, and went from cell to cell to seek his cure from those who enjoyed the greatest reputation for sanctity. No one, however, was able to afford him the least relief, until at length, throwing himself at the feet of Paphnucius in presence of all the solitaries, he confessed his crime, and published aloud the innocence of the Saint. He then implored of the holy man to return him good for evil by obtaining his cure from God ; upon which St. Paphnucius, kneeling down, offered up his prayers in his behalf, and delivered him from the devil who tormented him.—*Cassian.*

So far, my dear children, we have been speaking of the different sins forbidden by the eighth commandment ; can you now tell me what are the *duties* which it enjoins ? They are principally these—to speak the truth in all things great and small, to think kindly of our neighbour in our hearts, to speak of him always with charity and forbearance, and to guard his good name as we would our own.

END OF VOLUME I.

4)





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